Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-ONE • NUMBER ONE • JANUARY 1986

Behind the Black-Jewish Split
Glenn C. Loury

Do We Still Need Europe?
Eliot A. Cohen

New York Down, Washington Up
Tod Lindberg

A Misdiagnosis of American Medicine
Florence A. Ruderman

Professor Vendler's Garden of Verses
James Gardner

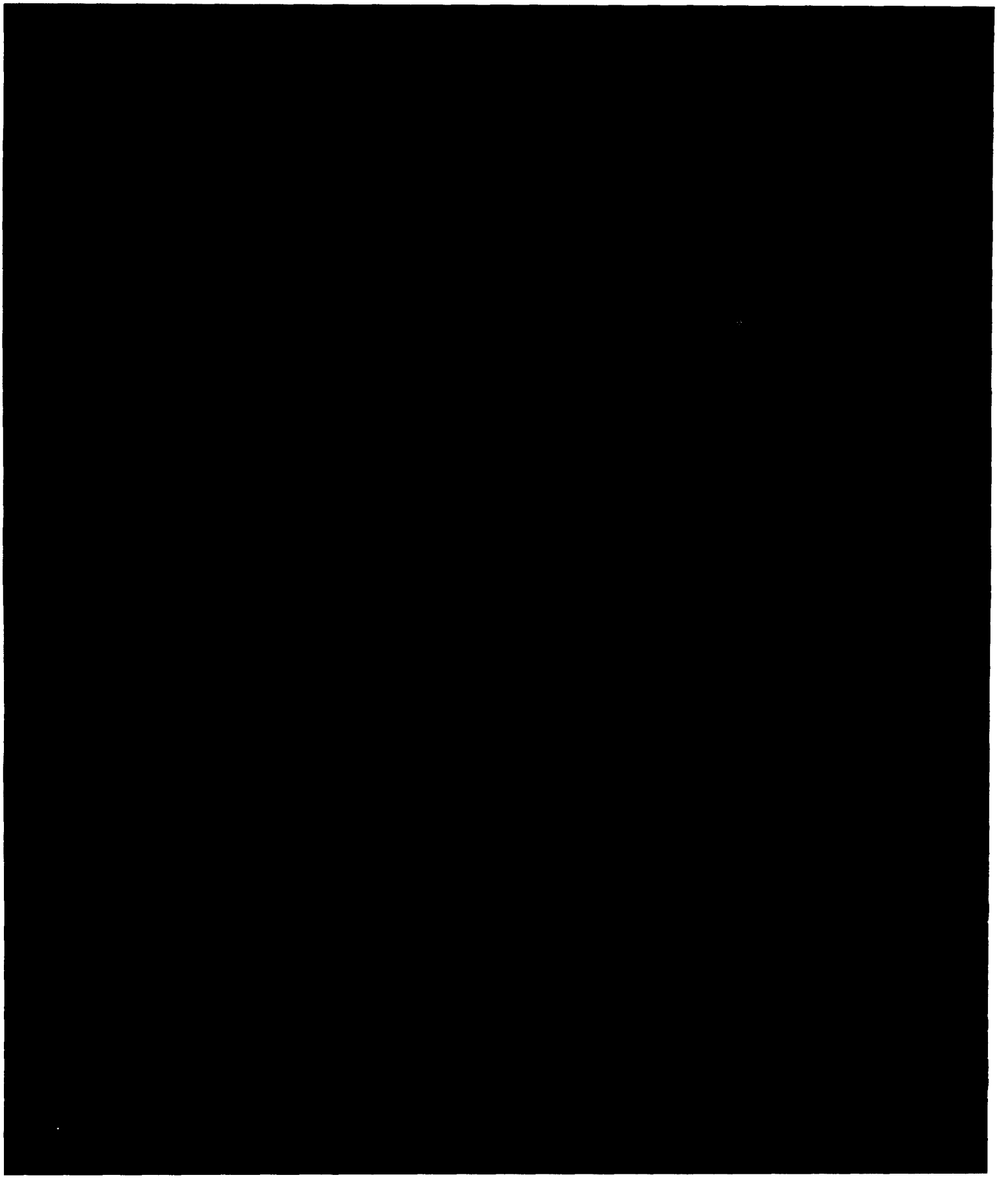
Dinner With Butler and Eisenhower
Edward Le Comte

Settlers—A Story
Edith Pearlman

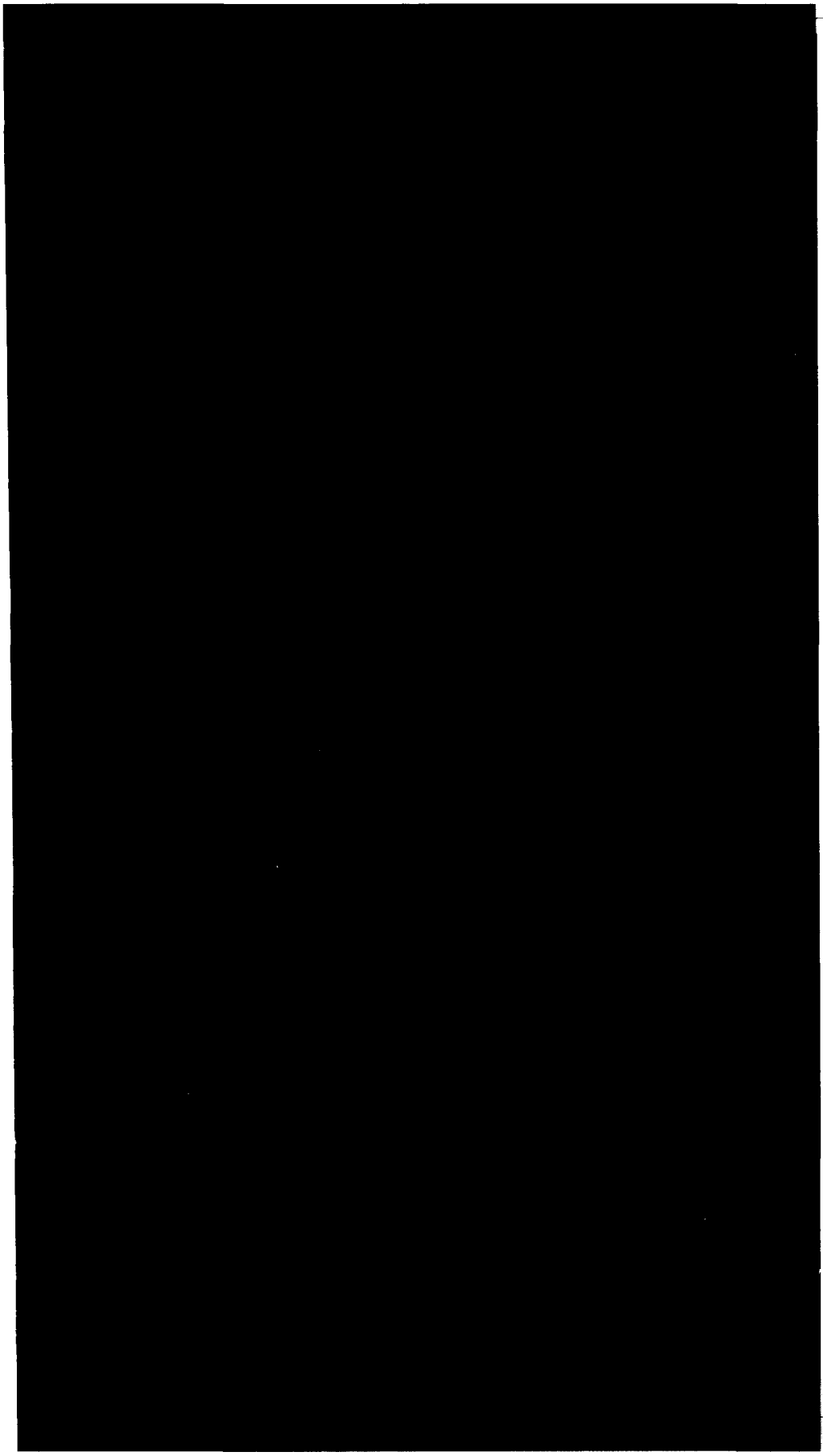
BOOKS IN REVIEW: James Q. Wilson / Richard S. Levy / Roger Kaplan / Edward Pearce / Rachel Abrams

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE / $3.25

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



STORMY WEATHER AHEAD FOR THE AUTOMATED OFFICE

In 1945, the U.S. Navy was putting the first digital computer through its paces. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, the room-sized machine broke down. After a long search, technicians discovered the cause. Deep within the machine, crushed between the points of a relay, was a moth.

"Bugs" have bedeviled Computer Man ever since.

Until recently, things were getting better every year. Each new generation of business machines has proved more reliable than the last.

Yet, for all this progress, the business that trusts its affairs to computers may

continued on next page

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

continued from preceding page

be more at risk today than at any time in the last 40 years.

The rise of office-wide and company-wide systems is changing the arithmetic of risk. The number and variety of devices now being installed multiply the chances that, on any given day, *something* will fail.

More disturbing: *business machines no longer fail alone.*

The "why" of this will be familiar if you ever struggled with those old-fashioned Christmas lights: one bad bulb and the whole string went dark. In an office system, each "bulb" is likely to be a $10,000 business machine. And the "string," a maze of cables and fiber optics stretching (literally) all over the map.

What's to be done? Must whole companies now be hostage to the performance of machines? Below, AT&T digs into the issues and finds reason for optimism—as well as alarm.

BLOOD. Any company whose life's blood pumps through a computer is going to want some sort of backup. A count of America's business machines would turn up thousands of devices whose sole job is to sit and wait.

All this duplication does as much to enrich hardware vendors as it does to protect system users.

By contrast, the gospel according to AT&T is "*communication, not duplication!*" In AT&T's world, information is portable. Our stock in trade are networks that can be instantly reconfigured to shift the burden of a downed computer to another device whose day-to-day chores are less immediate.

Like cast members in a Broadway show, the devices in such a system are capable of stepping into each other's roles at a moment's notice.

By no coincidence at all, the same AT&T networks that permit you to work around a problem can *prevent* most problems in the first place.

Remote sensing devices can now monitor the health of entire office systems around the clock from AT&T command posts miles away.

So sensitive are these probes that they can spotlight malfunctions in the making within individual machines—usually before the users themselves are aware of anything wrong.

These same probes also serve as *tools.* In AT&T's world, some 40% to 50% of all repairs can be made without a service call. Those are "real world" figures: AT&T now stands watch over 35,000 systems.

HITCH. The hitch in all this is that few companies live in an all-AT&T world. Few live in an all-*anything* world. More and more of today's office systems rest on a fragile ecology of devices from *many* vendors.

Vendor A may know his own stuff inside out. Ditto for Vendor B. But when your system depends on a whole alphabet of vendors, who do you call? Who's accountable?

That was precisely the question a

> ***For all this progress, the business that trusts its affairs to computers may be more at risk today than at any time in the last 40 years.***

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vendor A may know his own stuff inside out. Ditto for Vendor B. But when your system depends on a whole alphabet of vendors, who do you call? Who's accountable?

major electronics firm put to AT&T last winter. This company had built up data and communications networks using lines and equipment from 7 vendors, including some of AT&T's chief rivals.

What the company wanted was one vendor that would stand accountable for the workings of every line and every switch they owned in 48 states.

Would AT&T take the job?

As a service company, we're moving in that direction, but there are limits to what any company can promise where others' products are involved. We are judged by the promises we *keep.*

AT&T's proposal: a trial marriage. We'd start small, get it right, and expand from there. In this case, "starting small" meant across-the-board responsibility for systems at 50 sites in 16 states.

Today, as far as the electronics firm is concerned, it is AT&T's job to watchdog the performance of all these systems. When trouble knocks, it is now AT&T's job to pinpoint the fault, and to orchestrate the efforts of other vendors to put things right.

One AT&T-er sums up the complex logistics this way: "When a customer has one number to call – no matter when, no matter what – you'd better be ready to jump."

Free Offer: How does AT&T (or any vendor) work in harness with a competitor? A recent AT&T/Hewlett-Packard white paper offers an inside look at the issues, the pitfalls, and the keys to success. For a free copy, please telephone 1 800 247-1212. Or you may write Mr. Dale Hegstrom, AT&T Information Systems, P.O. Box 1405, Morristown, NJ 07960-1405.

◇

JEANS. AT&T now serves 7 million business customers. Some wear pinstripes, some wear jeans. They are a cross section of American business.

The biggest have more computers and communications gear than many *governments.*

It is these big companies who feel most keenly the lack of integrated service and support. They expect us to lead the charge to fill this void.

They see it as part of our job.

Meanwhile, we have customers who have yet to buy their first PCs. For them, we are a telephone, an Operator's voice, and someone to call "in case." (AT&T service technicians aren't drawn from a hat. Like neighborhood cops, each one patrols a particular business beat.)

Small or large, no two of our customers are exactly the same.

Our job is to be there. No matter who calls. No matter when. No matter what. We're AT&T.

AT&T
The right choice.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 81 NUMBER ONE *JANUARY 1986*

Articles 23 Behind the Black-Jewish Split *Glenn C. Loury*

28 Do We Still Need Europe? *Eliot A. Cohen*

36 New York Down, Washington Up *Tod Lindberg*

43 A Misdiagnosis of American Medicine *Florence A. Ruderman*

50 Professor Vendler's Garden of Verses *James Gardner*

56 Dinner With Butler and Eisenhower *Edward Le Comte*

Story 63 Settlers *Edith Pearlman*

Letters 6 from *Richard Nixon, M.C. O'Dowd, Charles J. Robinove, Paul Johnson, A.C. Wedemeyer, John Colville, Bernice R. Sandler, Mimi Alperin, Elaine Wishner, Lynn Hecht Schafran, Carol Leimas, Michael Levin, Eugene V. Rostow, David Bar-Illan, Nathan Glazer,* and others

Books in Review 68 Common Ground, by J. Anthony Lukas *James Q. Wilson*

72 The German Jew, by H.I. Bach *Richard S. Levy*

75 Liberalism and Its Challengers, by Alonzo L. Hamby *Roger Kaplan*

76 Alien Powers, by Kenneth Minogue *Edward Pearce*

78 The Victim's Song, by Alice R. Kaminsky *Rachel Abrams*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz

Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy

Managing Editor: Marion Magid

Associate Editor: Brenda Brown

Contributing Editors: Robert Alter
Milton Himmelfarb
Walter Laqueur

Comptroller: Philip Shamis

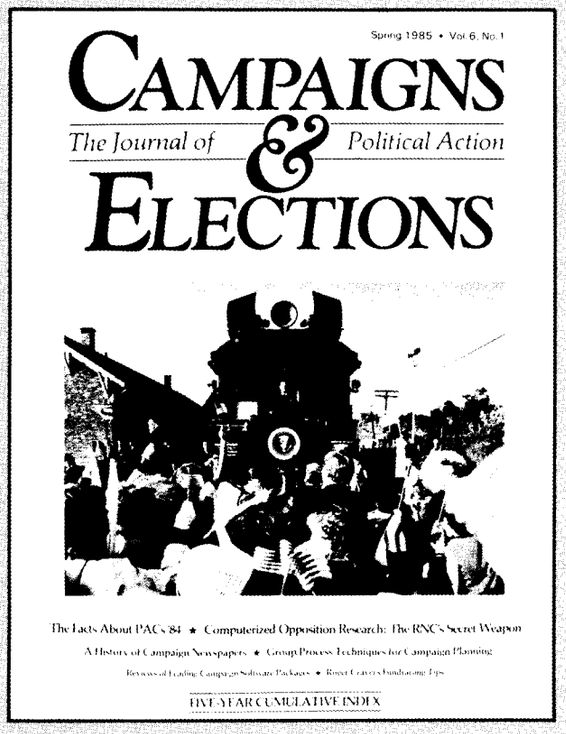
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi

Circulation Manager: Helene Hansen

COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $3.25, $33 a year; 3 years $89; 5 years $132—Add $5.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.
Copyright © 1986 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts, Religion Index One: Periodicals* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.
EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHEN AMERICA NEEDS YOU, YOU NEED:


Spring 1985 • Vol. 6, No. 1
CAMPAIGNS
The Journal of Political Action
& ELECTIONS
The Facts About PACs '84 ★ Computerized Opposition Research: The RNC's Secret Weapon
A History of Campaign Newspapers ★ Group Process Techniques for Campaign Planning
Reviews of Leading Campaign Software Packages ★ Direct Cancer Fundraising Tips
FIVE-YEAR CUMULATIVE INDEX

The Only Journal in the World Devoted to Political Campaign Management

James J. Kilpatrick calls it "the wave of the political future." The **New York Times** says it promises to "break the grip of the elaborate organizational and technical process involved in getting elected, a process heavily dependent on money and professional expertise" . . . "It's called CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS: The Journal of Political Action, and a quick read could make you a shoo-in." So proclaims the **Washington Weekly** . . . For more than five years C&E has been a guiding light to politicians as diverse as **Tom Hayden** and **Paul Laxalt**, top political pros like **David Garth**, **Bob Squier** and **Richard Viguerie**, and noted political scientists from **Michael Barone** to **Theodore White**.

OUR READERS ARE TOMORROW'S LEADERS!

YES, I want to start on the road to leadership right away as a C&E subscriber. Please sign me up for:

☐ 1 Year – $48 ☐ 2 Years – $84 (saves $12) ☐ 3 Years – $120 (saves $24)

☐ A Charter Subscription – the current year and all 20 back issues – 6 years of C&E beginning with Vol. I, No. 1 – 2500 pages of expertise covering all aspects of campaigning – $188 (saves $100)

☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Bill Me ☐ Charge: ☐ AMEX ☐ VISA ☐ MC Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

BONUS for payment with order: Send a check or charge with this coupon and we'll send you the latest edition of *Safire's Political Dictionary* ($9.95 value).

Mail to: CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS, 1621 Brookside Road, McLean, VA 22101

CALL (703) 534-7774 for Free Brochure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Howard I. Friedman, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Donald M. Blinken, *Chairman*

Morris B. Abram
Norman E. Alexander
Theodore Ellenoff
Edward E. Elson
Stephen Friedman
Lawrence Goldmuntz
Mark Goodson
Robert H. Haines
Bess Myerson
Robert L. Pelz
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
Gordon S. Rosenblum
Michael Saperstein
Nanette Scofield
Henry Sherman
John Slawson
Laurence A. Tisch

Letters from Readers

South Africa

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Johnson's article on South Africa ["The Race for South Africa," September 1985] is the best analysis of that tragic situation which has been published to date. Mr. Johnson makes so many powerful and persuasive points: that it is impossible to name any country, class, or racial group which would materially benefit from the destruction of the South African economy with the exception of the Soviet Union; that it is the only modern economy in Southern Africa; that per capita there are more black-owned cars in South Africa than there are private cars in the whole of the Soviet Union.

What impressed me most, and a concept which had not occurred to me before, was Mr. Johnson's conclusion that blacks and business have a common interest in dismantling apartheid, an interest which is paradoxically underlined by the disinvestment campaign. As Mr. Johnson devastatingly points out, if it succeeds, both will be victims.

I hope that decision-makers in government everywhere consider Mr. Johnson's analysis and heed his warnings.

RICHARD NIXON

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Johnson's article on South Africa is excellent, but there are one or two important points he does not mention which must be taken into account by those who wish to understand what is going on there. The current disorders in South Africa, which are so fully covered by the media in the United States, are not simply characteristic of African events but are, at least in South Africa, quite exceptional. It is important to know what has brought them about.

Mr. Johnson points out that South Africa is an African country but differs from the rest of Africa in being far more wealthy and industrialized. This is true, but South Africa is only wealthy and industrialized compared with other African countries. It is still a Third World country, partially developed, and in this it resembles some of the more developed countries of Latin America, especially those which have a mixed population, not all of European origin, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Chile. Like these countries, and perhaps especially Brazil, the developed sector is sufficiently large and impressive to put up a false front of development so that the unwary can easily mistake it for a First World country.

This often leads in the case of all these countries to their being judged, quite unfairly, by First World standards. When visitors encounter the poverty which actually exists, they easily imagine that it is merely marginal, like poverty in the United States or Britain and could easily be solved by appropriate social policies which the government is then thought to be merely maliciously refusing to implement. In fact, however, the per-capita incomes of these countries (which are all of fairly similar orders of magnitude) are something like one-tenth of that of the United States. Thus, no conceivable policy could produce a social situation in these countries which would be satisfactory by First World standards, except by means of a great deal of economic growth over a long period.

At the moment, South Africa resembles Brazil and Chile in another, more direct, respect: it is in the grip of a classical Third World economic crisis which was brought about in the normal Third World manner by government overspending.

The particular South African story is as follows. In 1979 and 1980 the price of gold rose rapidly from less than $300 an ounce to, at one point, over $800. Although the South African gold-mining industry is privately owned, it pays taxes on an unusual progressive basis, . . . so that 70 percent of this windfall fell immediately into the hands of the government. Like other governments, and not only in the Third World, the government of South Africa immediately proceeded to spend the money. A considerable proportion of the new expenditures benefited blacks, but that is by the way. The government set up programs which were very easy to start and very difficult to stop. Forward budgeting was done on the assumption that the gold price would remain at that level or even continue to rise. Instead, the price started to fall and slid away over a period of three years to about $320. The currency was allowed to depreciate to maintain the Rand value of gold, so that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

government revenue was sustained and expenditure was sustained, too. The result was that the economy continued to operate at a level of activity that took no cognizance of the enormous drop in foreign-exchange earnings. This led in due course inevitably to a balance-of-payments crisis.

The position was complicated by other factors. The first was the drought which hit the whole of Southern and East Africa for three successive seasons (this is the same drought which precipitated the Ethiopian famine). For one year the crops failed almost completely; in the following year they were better but well below requirements; and in the third, most recent, year they were fairly adequate but still below average. Agricultural exports ceased and food had to be imported, putting a further strain on the balance of payments. At the same time, because of the disproportionate political power of the farmers, the system of assistance to the drought-stricken farmers was open-ended and uncontrolled and contributed substantially to overspending. (Indeed, in its agricultural policy South Africa does resemble a First World country, more specifically, the Common Market.)

Furthermore, the government wished the economy to be in good shape at the time of the referendum which was held in 1983 on the new constitution. There can be little doubt that this consideration led to a further procrastination of adjustments which were already obviously needed.

The crash came in the middle of 1984 when, in response to the deteriorating balance of payments and the high rate of inflation (about 15 percent), the government instituted precisely the package of measures which is traditionally imposed by the IMF (although the IMF played no part in this case). The currency was further devalued; government expenditure was cut drastically; and interest rates were raised to very high levels. The package had the predicted and desired effect. The balance of payments has come into a large surplus; government expenditure has been cut; consumer spending has fallen; and in spite of the inflationary pressures created by devaluation, inflation is steady and even falling.

From an economist's point of view, the economy is now in good shape, but as in other countries which have taken the same medicine, there has been a very high rise in unemployment, stemming from the contraction of those industries which had expanded in response to excessive consumer credit or excessive government expenditure. The unrest broke out about three months after the introduction of the deflationary package.

Those industries which are geared to exports have been stimulated by the devaluation and are in fact expanding and taking on labor, but it will be a considerable time, even if all goes well, before unemployment is brought down to an acceptable level. The position is made more difficult by the fact that the different types of industries are not evenly spread across the country and the hard-hit industries are heavily concentrated in certain areas, notably the Eastern Cape. This no doubt explains why the unrest has been much more severe in some parts of the country than in others.

M. C. O'Dowd
Johannesburg, South Africa

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read and reread Paul Johnson's article with a sense of disbelief and almost fright. It is hard for me to understand that an author can have so many facts right and so many interpretations of the facts wrong. . . .

I will refrain from commenting on the main thrust of the article, the arguments for and against disinvestment, since I am not an economist or businessman and therefore do not know whether or not disinvestment is a proper strategy to bring South Africa in line with the desires of the United States.

But I have traveled and worked in South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho for short periods, and I have some experience with the situation there. During the time I was in South Africa, I felt a constant embarrassment and unease at the fact that I had to live, even for a short time, as part of a society of oppression and degradation. I discussed apartheid with a number of people who were both for and against it, and my most

Speak Hebrew like a diplomat!®

What sort of people need to learn a foreign language as quickly and effectively as possible? *Foreign Service personnel,* that's who. Members of America's diplomatic corps are assigned to U.S. embassies abroad, where they must be able to converse fluently in every situation.

Now you can learn to speak Hebrew just as these diplomatic personnel do—with the Foreign Service Institute's Hebrew course.

This course is designed to teach you to speak and read modern Hebrew. It is not intended as a text for the study of the Bible or other Hebrew literature. The course teaches an easy, unaccented, conversational language with emphasis on spoken Hebrew, although reading and writing skills are acquired as study progresses.

The course turns your cassette player into a "teaching machine." It starts by training you in the sounds and pronunciation of Hebrew. In subsequent lessons the method of instruction incorporates guided imitation, repetition, memorization, pattern and response drills, and conversation. You set your own pace—testing yourself, correcting errors, reinforcing accurate responses. The accompanying text includes a 15 page glossary and a section on the Hebrew alphabet.

AUDIO-FORUM®

The sounds of modern Hebrew are relatively easy for Americans to learn. With the advantage of hearing a native speaking Hebrew on tape, and the ability to rewind your cassette for review, you learn the language as spoken today at your convenience and at your own speed.

☐ **Hebrew.** 24 cassettes (35 hr.), plus 552-p. text. All for $215.

(CT residents add sales tax.)

TO ORDER BY PHONE, PLEASE CALL TOLL-FREE NUMBER: **1-800-243-1234.**

To order by mail, clip this ad and send with your name and address, and a check or money order—or charge to your credit card (VISA, MasterCard, AmEx, Diners) by enclosing card number, expiration date, and your signature.

The Foreign Service Institute's Hebrew course is unconditionally guaranteed. Try it for three weeks. If you are not convinced it's the fastest, easiest, most painless way to learn Hebrew, return it and we will refund every penny you paid. Order today!

120 courses in 41 other languages also available. Write us for free catalog. Our 12th year.

Audio-Forum
Room X52
On-The-Green,
Guilford, CT 06437
(203) 453-9794

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

telling encounter was with a "colored" hotel employee who told me with a shrug of his shoulders, "It's very simple. We are held captive here."

In contrast, when I crossed the borders into Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho, it was like going from night to day. I met people without the degree of fear and servility that I found in South Africa, people with dignity and grace, and people who felt that they had a greater say in their own destiny. . . .

Mr. Johnson's statements about whether or not South Africa is typical of other African nations are disingenuous. . . . Suffice it to say that South Africa, alone among the countries of Africa, was colonized by an occupying power which formed, reformed, and transformed the nation into a state which is an anomaly, not only in Africa but in the world. Apartheid is an abomination. It can and will be dismantled, and the future for the citizens of South Africa (all of them) is dangerous and uncertain. . . . Mr. Johnson's argument tends to set standards for South Africa ... based on whether the black population there has higher wages than blacks in other African countries. . . . I find it hard to believe that it is thought relevant that a black South African has a higher wage than blacks in other African countries when he is not allowed to live with his family, is subjected to the inhumanly degrading pass laws, and is not allowed to live and work where he pleases.

The standards by which the black and mixed-race citizens of South Africa and the people of the United States judge the government of South Africa are not *relative* standards based on the degree of oppression or on the relative degree of well-being compared to other nations. They are *absolute* standards that are based on the absence of racial discrimination, on the freedom of the individual to make his way in society as best he can, on the responsibility of governments to provide the opportunities and means of self-advancement, and on upholding to the utmost the dignity of the individual in a nation.

For this reason, I find the arguments in the article to be red herrings, regardless of Mr. Johnson's stated desire to do away with apartheid, and I am confident that the black citizens of South Africa are better able to diagnose the situation and to decide among themselves how to solve it than we are. They may be able to make progress without more violence. I hope so. But if an oppressed people must resort to violence to achieve the absolute aims of individual dignity and equality, so be it. The American Revolution is a better lesson for the blacks of South Africa than a comparison with the poorer states of Africa.

CHARLES J. ROBINOVE
Fairfax, Virginia

PAUL JOHNSON writes:

I thank Richard Nixon for his generous comments. M. C. O'Dowd rightly draws attention to the immediate cause of the unrest in South Africa. I am uneasy about accepting his Latin American analogy, however. South Africa has traditionally run its national finances in a prudent manner, keeping government spending and inflation low, but it went badly off course in the early 1980's. I wish I could share Mr. O'Dowd's confidence that the austerity package will work. The difficulty about dismantling apartheid, which the government is now seriously bent on doing, is that it will cost a great deal of money, particularly in raising black educational standards. That is one reason why South Africa needs the help and sympathy of the world, in place of the present concerted attempt to damage its economy.

As for Charles J. Robinove, I do not see how anyone can comment seriously on the problems of Southern Africa while disclaiming knowledge of or concern for the economic context. I do not claim to speak for black Africans, but I assume their basic desires are similar to ours: they want a decent standard of living, a better chance for their children, and freedom under the law. In most of the new black African states they have none of these things. Since independence, multiparty democracy has been abolished virtually everywhere, standards of justice have fallen, schools and universities have deteriorated, and in many cases there has been a catastrophic decline in real wages. In Zaire, for instance, wages are only one-tenth of their value before independence in 1960. All but a handful of black African countries experienced minus growth over the past decade.

The end of the drought and the success of the 1985 harvest is the best news Africa has had for many years. But the steady decline will be resumed if the disinvestment campaign seriously damages the South African economy. The government there has already threatened to expel 1.5 million black foreign workers if the campaign continues. The economies of the three countries Mr. Robinove mentions—Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho—would be among the worst affected by this move.

Losing the Peace

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

John Colville's "How the West Lost the Peace in 1945" [September 1985] stirred me deeply. Mr. Colville is fully justified, in my opinion, in emphasizing the awful ironies that marked the outcome of World War II. Although a grand coalition of Western powers and the Soviet Union won the war, it is hard to deny that the Soviets won the peace. The enormous efforts and sacrifices through which the democracies sought to defend freedom thus ended in historic gains for tyranny.

The question of how all this came about is surely one of fundamental and continuing importance. Mr. Colville, writing from the perspective of the summit in wartime Britain (and with rhetorical effect that recalls the powers of the Prime Minister himself), provides some thought-provoking answers. "The Soviet triumph," he concludes, "was in large part due to the folly of American policy in the last, vital months of the fighting; and that folly stemmed from what Winston Churchill called 'the deadly hiatus' between President Roosevelt's losing his grip and President Truman's imposing his. It occurred at precisely the most inopportune time." With German power crumbling under assault from East and West, issues of crucial military-political significance arose that required prompt as well as shrewd and thoughtful attention. Such attention, alas, could not be given by "a dying President, a blind State Department, and generals who saw no reason to inject political considerations into strategic decisions."

Although shortly I am going to challenge this interpretation, let me say that there is more truth in Mr. Colville's analysis than I, as an American, am happy to admit. The President was indeed a dying man during the fateful months in ques-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. I last saw him toward the end of March 1945, when I reported to the White House to brief him on the situation in China, where I was serving as Commander of U.S. forces. As I breakfasted with the President off the edge of his desk, I was shocked by his pallor and obvious weakness. I found it necessary to repeat statements again and again, for his mind seemed to wander and he failed to grasp simple points. He would throw his head back and pause, mouth agape, as if to gather strength and breath. I remember clearly how he admonished me against aiding the French in Southeast Asia. He added—with as much force as he could muster—that he hoped to see the end of the European colonial empires in Asia.

There is sad truth, too, in Mr. Colville's characterization of the U. S. State Department as "blind." Our foreign-policy establishment certainly was ill-equipped during this period to provide either dynamic policy leadership or wise advice. Moreover, prevailing sentiment in the Department (as at the White House) was almost uncritically dedicated to the myth that "Uncle Joe" Stalin was a good and potentially cooperative democrat as well as a great wartime ally.

Mr. Colville also is perceptive in observing what he calls the "cocoon" which shrouded the professional vision of the American military. All of us in uniform—certainly we of the Regular Army—had been conditioned throughout our careers to accept and observe the limits of "strictly military" concerns. We defined ourselves, and were defined by others, as *executors,* not *makers,* of public policy. We were expected rigorously to refrain from "politics"—a restraint that often was interpreted as discouraging even the exercise of the ballot, for voting meant choosing one set of candidates or policies over others. These practices certainly achieved their intended effect of insulating the Republic from militarism. They did little, however, to prepare military professionals to function imaginatively in those crucial but sensitive areas where strategy and policy necessarily overlap. (The isolation of the military had more general consequences in the realm of ideas: it promoted the notion that military strategy and foreign policy can be isolated from each other in theory as well as in practice. In the American system, the military departments handled strategy, the State Department foreign policy. No one, with the exception of a single grossly overextended human individual, the President, was charged with the most difficult task of all—the intelligent relating of military power to political purpose. Some of the implications of this absurd state of affairs were brought to my attention during my three years as a strategic planner in the Plans Division of the War Department General Staff.)

Having said all this, however, let me return to Mr. Colville's central thesis: that the follies of American policy during the "deadly hiatus" between effective Presidencies in the spring of 1945 were largely responsible for the Soviet triumph. To illustrate this folly, Mr. Colville cites Eisenhower's allegedly naive decision to launch a final drive across central Germany with Bradley's 12th Army Group in lieu of the previously planned thrust by Montgomery's 21st Army Group in the direction of Berlin.

Perhaps this decision of Eisenhower *did* cost the Western Allies a great opportunity to "beat the Russians to Berlin." Inasmuch as I was in China at the time, I am not in a position to offer a first-hand opinion on the issue. I *was* personally and deeply involved, however, from 1941 onward, with planning U. S. and Allied strategy for Europe as well as other theaters of war. That experience convinced me (and my subsequent reading in the postwar literature has only confirmed the view) that the decisions which opened the door for the ultimate Soviet capture of Berlin were taken *not* in 1945 but in 1942 and 1943. It is indeed my belief that the Western Allies, in consequence of the course they actually followed in 1942 and 1943, forfeited opportunities to meet the Red Army at points *far to the east of Berlin.* Moreover, responsibility for these lost opportunities must be laid, in my opinion, not on the follies of the Americans (great though these doubtless were!), but on the tenaciously pursued strategy of our British ally.

The history of Allied disagreements on European strategy has been told many times. I shall not attempt, therefore, to retell it, except to note that the Anglo-American conflict centered on the question of the timing and nature of a second front. The American military staffs, supported wholeheartedly by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and (at times) by President Roosevelt, favored a rapid concentration of Allied air and ground strength in the British Isles (with rigid economies in all other theaters), a constantly intensified campaign of aerial assault on the northwest coast of France *in the early summer of 1943,* and a drive eastward with highly mobile forces toward the industrial heart of Germany. Early reports of German progress in atomic research at Narvik, Norway, and possibly elsewhere, had intensified our sense of urgency with respect to timing. U. S. planners viewed this bold scenario as offering the best possible chances for early, decisive, and economical victory.

In contrast to this approach, British staffs (headed most effectively by the indomitable Prime Minister, Winston Churchill) were resolutely dedicated to an indirect strategy of attrition in Europe. Their preferred road to victory lay in what we often called in Washington "periphery pecking" operations: they would seize opportunities and exploit weaknesses on the fringes of the continent—in Scandinavia, the Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Near East. By gradually "closing the ring" and exhausting the foe they would hasten the day when the Western Allies could return to the continent at acceptable levels of risk to deliver a *coup de grâce.*

Churchill's views prevailed to a decisive degree. The great D-Day invasion of Europe came not in 1943, as the American planners had urged, but an entire year later—in 1944. Instead of rallying for an early decisive blow, the Western Allies opted for major campaigns in the peripheral areas of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Departing from the sound resolve of earlier agreements to defeat Hitler first, they also accelerated operations in the far-flung war against Japan. By the time they got around to the Normandy landings, the Red Army already had been in Poland and the Balkans for several months. By the time Eisenhower's forces reached the Rhine, the Soviets were well advanced on their road to Berlin.

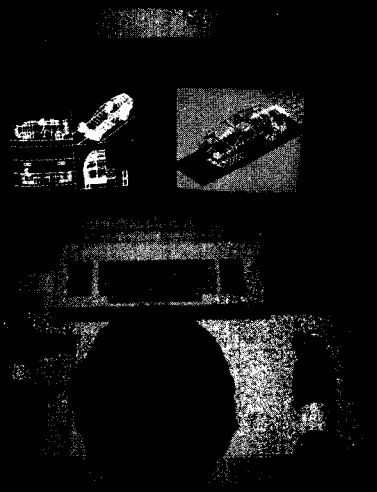
It remains my contention that, had the Western Allies followed the U. S. plans, had they resisted the temptation to pour resources into costly but indecisive operations in the Mediterranean area and elsewhere, had they assigned timely and adequate industrial priority to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

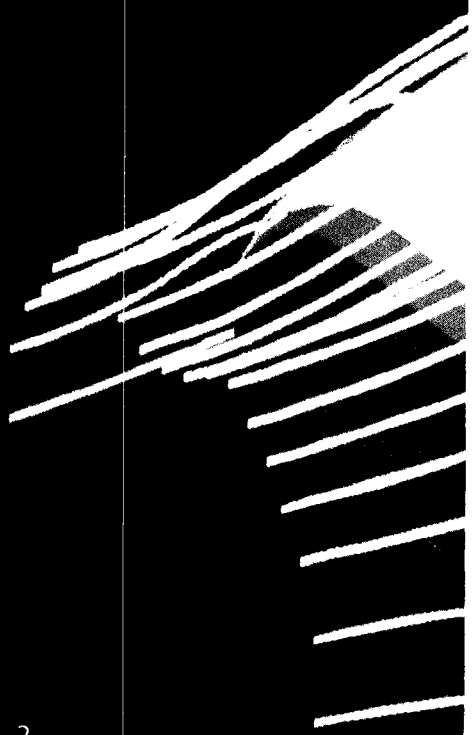
DRIVING AMERICA DOWN ROADS WE'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE.

General Motors is on a journey to a far-off place just around the corner, the 21st Century. With the help of its thousands of scientists, designers and engineers, GM is embarking on an odyssey into the unknown. Roads paved with scientific and technological wonders that might seem like science fiction. But at GM, they're reality. Now. Lasers that probe body structure as no man's eyes ever could. Electronic navigation systems that tell you where you are and how to get where you're going. But the road doesn't stop there. The 21st Century lies dead ahead.

GM is leading the way there by adding new dimensions of electronic wizardry and computer expertise to its vast worldwide resources. Today's GM is evolving into a GM the future will demand. Bolder. Daring. More responsive. Speaking a new language. Venturing in new directions.

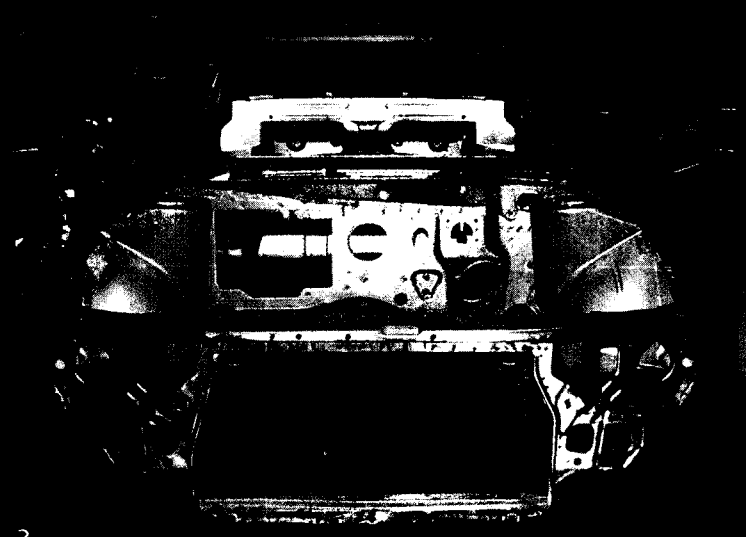


1.

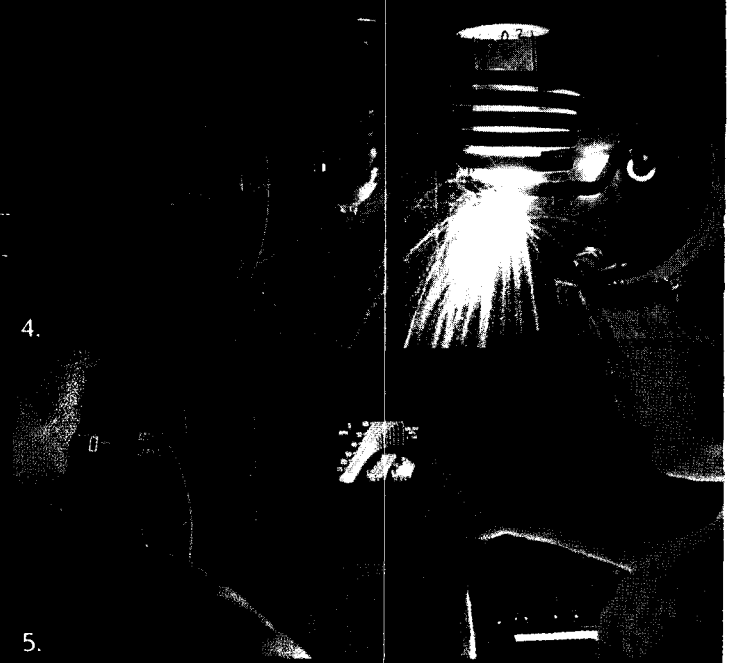


2.

THE GM ODYSSEY: SC



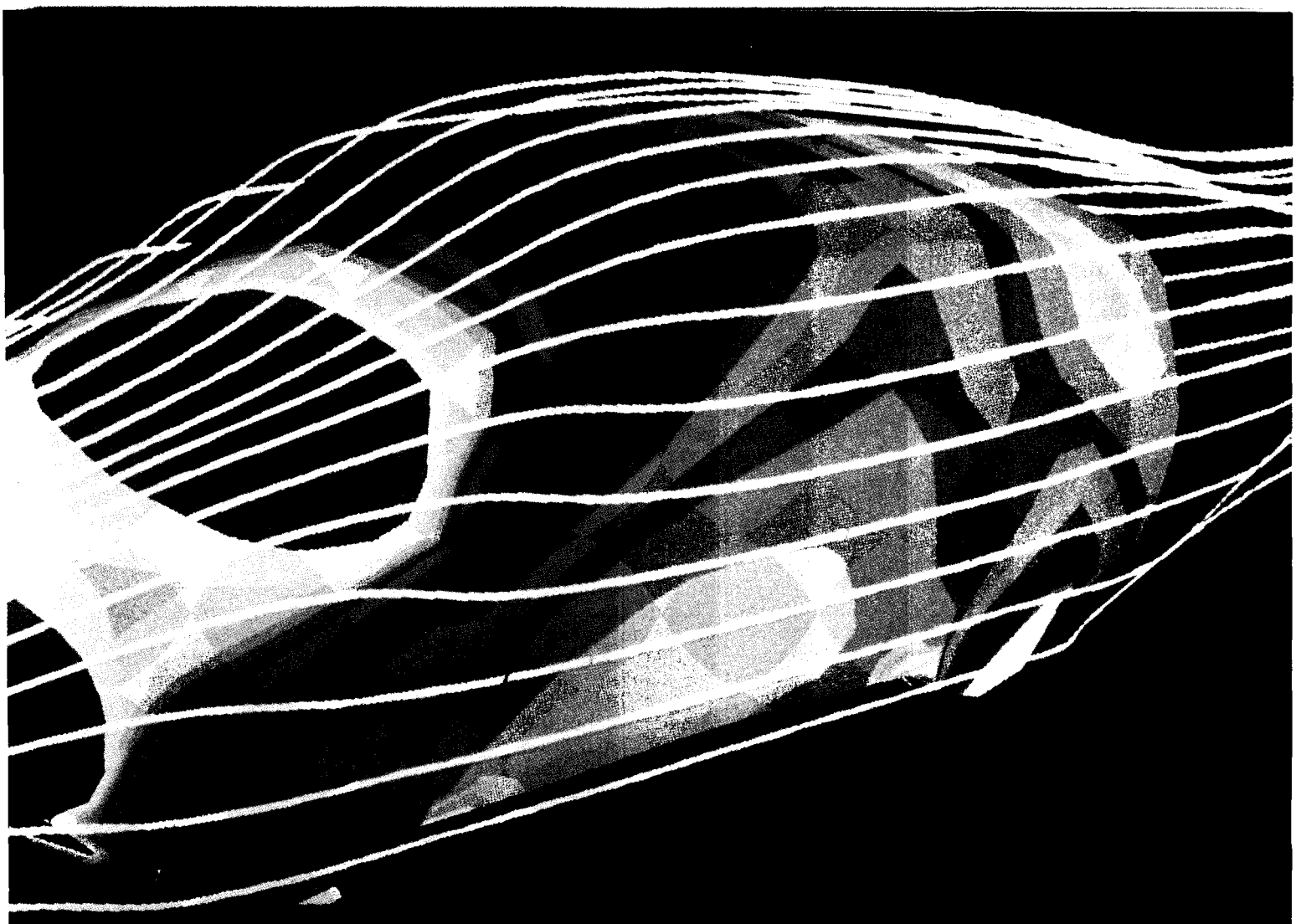
3.



4.

5.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ENCE NOT FICTION GM

1. ACC (ADVANCED CONCEPT CENTER). Where engineers and designers work together to predict how people will live in the future and what kind of vehicles they'll need.
2. COMPUTATIONAL FLUID DYNAMICS. Computer-simulated aerodynamic modeling that generates more fuel-efficient designs in weeks instead of months.
3. AUTOMOTIVE DIMENSIONAL CHECKER. 122 lasers and cameras probe to 5/10,000 of an inch for weld and seam accuracy to ensure solid, tight-fitting car bodies.
4. MAGNEQUENCH. A new material for manufacturing smaller, lighter, more powerful magnets that will revolutionize motor-driven parts in your car, and could lead to fewer parts, better performance, durability and fuel economy.
5. INSTRUMENT PANEL. Touch-sensitive cathode-ray tube with multiple functions that include diagnosing service problems in seconds.
6. ELECTRONIC POD SYSTEM. Advanced electronic driver information clustered on and around the steering wheel for accessibility to maximize eyes-on-the-road driving.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the construction of landing craft, had they single-mindedly concentrated their strength in Britain for an assault on the continent in 1943—at a time when the mass of the German army was still irretrievably committed far to the east, when the relative strengths of the belligerents would probably have favored the Allies, and when the defenses of the Atlantic Wall had not yet been developed—Anglo-American forces might well have met the Red Army on the Vistula rather than the Elbe.

It will not do, as Mr. Colville attempts, to discredit the American planners by suggesting that they advocated—in the rash and premature style of military amateurs—an all-out assault on *Festung Europa* ("Fortress Europe") in 1942. I had thought that that old canard had been laid to rest by historians on both sides of the Atlantic; yet it continues to be repeated, especially by British writers, as though mere repetition would make it true. The confusion on this point arose from the existence of contingency plans prepared in Washington which contemplated emergency operations to be undertaken in the event of a sudden collapse either of German or of Soviet power. (As most of your readers doubtless know, contingency plans are constantly being drafted by planning staffs who must try to anticipate any and all plausible eventualities. "Plans" of this type are not policy decisions; they become such only when and if the assumptions on which they are based actually materialize.) I personally played a part in drafting those documents, along with the other more ambitious plans that looked toward the main event of 1943. I am sure it would greatly surprise my late chief, General Marshall, were he to be told that he advocated the cross-channel invasion under the conditions actually prevailing in 1942.

Several additional points deserve comment. In his discussion of Operation Anvil or Dragoon (the Allies' diversionary landing on the Mediterranean coast of France in August 1944), Mr. Colville restates the case for a movement into Europe by way of the "soft underbelly" of the Balkans. However attractive the thought of "threatening Vienna from the east" might have been, the attendant difficulty of forcing what would have been a fiercely contested passage of the Alps impresses me now, as it did then, as rendering such an operation utterly impractical. I simply cannot visualize major ground forces "marching through" the Llubljana gap with the facility Mr. Colville suggests.

The question of Soviet-British-U. S. relationships during the war also requires comment. I share the view expressed by Mr. Colville that President Roosevelt's expectations respecting the Soviets were unwarranted and most unfortunate. The Prime Minister certainly took the measure of Stalin in a way the President never did. I share, too, the belief that the dogmatic anti-colonialism of U. S. policy in the generation of World War II was fraught with consequences quite unforeseen and dangerous. I do not believe it accurate or fair to suggest, however, as Mr. Colville does, that President Roosevelt or any other American official felt at war's end that the welfare of mankind *should* rest in the hands of the U.S. and the USSR. Americans, for all their newfound sense of global responsibility, were earnestly dedicated to the ideal of collective security; as I interpreted the mood, they had no ambition whatsoever to establish worldwide hegemony in cooperation with the Soviets. The increasing emphasis that U.S. policy seemed to place on its postwar relationship with the USSR reflected no more than a recognition of the shifts in global power relationships that actually were occurring. Certainly the U.S.-Soviet harmony at Teheran regarding the second front did not signal American abandonment of Britain. That incident represented little more than a continuation of the old tug-of-war between proponents of an early invasion, on the one hand, and further Mediterranean commitments on the other. Stalin, for his own reasons, sided with the Americans in favor of the second front.

One final comment on Anglo-American relations during the war: Mr. Colville speaks of an undercurrent of anti-British sentiment in America rooted in memories of George III, the Redcoats, Bunker Hill, etc. That factor was not, in my opinion, especially important. Of much greater significance was the second factor mentioned, namely, the feeling that the British were in fact "outsmarting" American policy-makers and manipulating American policy. My own concern, and I believe that of most of my military colleagues, arose from observations of the skill and energy with which our British allies pressed their interests and points of view at all levels of the U.S. government (including the Presidency) and throughout American society. The openness of the American system, the divided structure of our government, and the particularly haphazard administration of President Roosevelt all invited and contributed to the success of those efforts. One had only to attend combined staff meetings and the historic summit conferences, especially during the early years of the war (Casablanca comes forcefully to mind), to sense the superior state of preparation and effective policy coordination achieved by the British military and civilian staffs. The performance of the Americans, by way of contrast, often seemed bungling and ineffective.

I seldom observed among my American colleagues, military or civilian, any attitudes that could fairly be described as "anti-British." Most of us were unreserved in our admiration, even affection, for our British allies, and wholeheartedly dedicated to the alliance. We felt it important to the integrity of that alliance, however, and to the self-respect and mutual respect of the partners, to preserve, even in the midst of war, a healthy sense of our distinctive national goals and interests. Some American "Anglophiles" lost their balance in this regard and branded those who did not as "anti-British." (Eisenhower, I hasten to add, was *not* such an Anglophile.) Fortunately, most of my British comrades-in-arms and friends understood my position on these matters, and I believe they respect me for taking the stands I did.

A. C. WEDEMEYER
General, U. S. Army (Ret.)
Boyds, Maryland

JOHN COLVILLE writes:

It would be presumptuous for me to argue too sharply with General Wedemeyer, who was an active and wise participant in many of the momentous planning decisions of World War II. I am, in any case, in agreement with much of what he writes in his brilliant analysis of my article.

An Allied landing in Northern Europe in 1943, with an absence of sufficient landing craft, no Mulberry Harbor, no massive air superiority, no oil pipeline under the English Channel, and the choice of target for the assault effectively re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stricted to the Pas de Calais, might or might not have had a chance of success. Churchill thought not, as did that outstanding, if taciturn, soldier Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke. Brooke was wholeheartedly supported in this view by General Marshall's close friend Sir John Dill, and by the British Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Charles Portal. Failure would have been a major disaster for the Allies, and the ignominious defeat of the landing at Dieppe in August 1942, despite the advantage of surprise, proved that the German garrisons in Northern France were alert and formidable.

I think there was much to be said for Churchill's analogy of a bullfight. The victories in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy were the *banderillas*. Sustained Soviet resistance sapped the bull's strength, and the matador's killing thrust was to be the landing in Northern France. To charge an unweakened bull, one of the fiercest ever bred, would have been to court disaster. As it was, even in 1944 the Germans, heavily engaged on the Russian front and overwhelmingly outmatched in the air, put up a tremendous resistance in Normandy. A year earlier, I believe they would have stood a good chance of spectacular victory against Allied troops who, except for those who had fought at Dunkirk and in Tunisia, would have had no battle experience.

However, the main burden of my argument related not to the decisions rightly or wrongly taken in 1942 and 1943, but to the situation with which we were faced in March 1945. By then it was clear to us in Britain that Stalin's idea of Allied unity was that we should give him carte blanche to impose his own will in Eastern and Central Europe. In return he would, in due course, be graciously pleased to assist us in defeating Japan and would, as a reward, obtain certain Japanese occupied territories.

Lewis Douglas, who was a member of the U.S. delegation at the Yalta Conference, told me how dejected he was by his colleagues' cheerful acceptance of Russian demands. He was horrified by an American offer to discuss with the Russians, behind the backs of the British, the future of Hong Kong. That really was carrying anti-colonialism a bit far. At Christmas 1944, Churchill, on his purely personal initiative, had saved Greece from seizure by the Communists. If Roosevelt and the State Department had had their way, Greece would have disappeared behind the Iron Curtain so as not to disturb the splendid relationship with our Soviet allies. I love, respect, and admire the United States; but I don't embrace in that sentiment American foreign policy in 1944 and the first part of 1945.

It would be difficult to deny that Eisenhower could have taken Berlin and Prague (even if not Vienna) well before the Russians, and his entering into a private strategic arrangement directly with Stalin, on March 28, 1945, is indefensible. With the Western Allies sitting firmly in those two great cities, Stalin could not have prevaricated, as he did, over the Allied Control Commissions, and Austria would not have had to wait ten years for its freedom.

Nairobi

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Michael Levin's article about the United Nations Decade for Women Conference held in Nairobi ["What Nairobi Wrought," October 1985] with much surprise, having attended the conference as part of a delegation of twenty-three women representing the American Jewish Committee, the same organization that publishes Commentary. At best, Mr. Levin's article recalls the story of the blind men describing an elephant, each coming up with an inaccurate picture of what an elephant is. Mr. Levin, though not blind, apparently went to Nairobi, nevertheless, with blinders on his eyes: he saw—much of it distorted—a bit of the conference but apparently never gained a sense of the *whole* conference. He also came to Nairobi as a representative of Commentary, and it was clear to whomever he spoke to there that he came prepared to damn the conference. His biases and misperceptions about Nairobi are in keeping with his past writings about women.

For example, he names some of the groups which participated in Forum '85, organized by nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), but only those which he considers to be radical, thereby giving the impression that the majority of organizations represented at the conference were radical. His claim that "13,000 radical feminists" attended the forum is bizarre to almost anyone who was there, including the several hundred who attended the forum representing numerous Jewish organizations.

The forum was open to all organizations; it would be foolish not to expect some "radical" groups to have been there. But had Mr. Levin read the program he also would have noticed groups such as the Federation of Ghana Business and Professional Women, Northern California Black Women Physicians, Histadrut, the International Council of Adult Education, and the National Federation of Indian Women—hardly "radical" groups.

In fact, not everyone who came to the conference was even a feminist to begin with. Some came because the issues they were dealing with, such as population control, have a woman's component within them. Others came for political reasons and to use the conference to press for attention and support for particular political issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Iran-Iraq conflict. Most left, however, with an increased understanding and support of women's issues, whether they came as committed feminists like myself or were further down on the spectrum.

Depending on which of the over 1,000 workshops you attended you could come away with very different views of the conference. You could have gone to workshops dealing with Arab women, as apparently Mr. Levin did, and leave with the view that the forum was highly politicized and polarized. Contrary to Mr. Levin's statement that "the hatred of Israel" was what "ran through the entire forum, and indeed gave it unity," the vast majority of workshops had nothing to do whatsoever with Arab-Israeli issues. If *any* political issue "dominated" the conference, it was apartheid. In fact, it is quite possible that the vast majority of the people who attended workshops probably never heard anything at all about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There were workshops about almost any imaginable topic that could deal with women. In addition to the general ones such as those dealing with education, employment, and legal inequities, there were a vast number of workshops dealing with other issues such as the special difficulties faced by women in refugee camps and by women as migrants; organizing rural women for economic development; women and forests; women under apartheid; Puerto Rican women in the South Bronx; women

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in emergency situations in the Middle East; cancer in black women; and female sexuality and bodily functions in different religious traditions. They were sponsored by groups as diverse as the Iraqi Women's League; the Catholic Women's League of Canada; the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau; the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations; and the Hubert Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota.

As Mr. Levin noted (and in this case, accurately), the earlier conference in Copenhagen in 1980 had been seriously marred by disruption by Arab women who grabbed microphones from Israeli women, drowned them out, and otherwise prevented them and other Jewish women or anyone who disagreed with them from speaking. The UN organizers and the Danish government had been caught by surprise and were unable or unwilling to deal successfully with the politicization and anti-Semitic outbursts at that conference.

What Mr. Levin did not notice was that this time both the UN organizers and the government of Kenya were from the start prepared to prevent disturbances and to deal with these issues. The Kenyan government made it clear that anyone who disrupted a workshop would be removed by security police. (The police were actually called at a handful of workshops.) At potentially controversial workshops a statement was read initially to remind people about the need to respect others' rights and to discuss issues peacefully. Moderators were given instructions on how to handle disruptions, and often they were successful. While many of the sessions where Arab-Israeli issues were raised were indeed heated, the Arabs did not triumph at every one of these, as Mr. Levin seems to imply. For example, I was at one workshop, sponsored in part by the American Jewish Committee, where Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish women were discussing the implications for the status of women within their respective religions. A group of Arab women attended and began to ask questions about the Arab-Israeli conflict. The moderator informed them that that was not the subject of this particular workshop. The women subsequently left, without further comment.

Indeed, the two most striking things about the conference seem not even to have been noticed by Mr. Levin. First, women from vastly different cultures with different experiences and values found much in common with one another at this conference, for what they learned is that women, no matter what country they are from, have much in common and are dealing with very much the *same* issues, even though the problems may vary somewhat in different places. In every country, education is a problem, whether of basic literacy or the number of women in doctoral programs. In every country, employment is an issue. Women earn less than men all over the world; the more prestigious and higher paid the job, the less likely that women will be employed in it; occupational segregation is a worldwide phenomenon. Similarly, there are legal inequities in every country, whether it is a question of no Equal Rights Amendment in the United States or women lacking property rights in numerous parts of the world.

In every country, women are the most underrepresented group politically, whether one looks at the national and local governing bodies or anywhere else in the political system. Health issues, especially concerning maternal and reproductive problems, abound throughout the world, whether it is a woman in England who must wait five months for a Pap test to discover if she has cancer (even if she is bleeding and symptomatic), or a woman in Kenya where birth control is difficult to obtain and where botched abortions are one of the leading causes of female deaths. Child care, family violence, pornography, prostitution, and the problems of aging women are issues of increasing concern in every country.

The second point that Mr. Levin missed is that despite or because of all the problems to be solved, women are organizing around the world to improve their condition. They came from all over the world to the largest conference on women's issues ever held in order to share their mutual concern about the problems confronting women. I went to one workshop on grassroots organizing for political power. A woman from Argentina told what she was doing there to organize women. At the end of the workshop women from countries as different as Greece and Thailand told how they were doing the same thing. I read the sign-in sheet to see which countries were represented in the room; among them were Finland, Bulgaria, Barbados, Samoa, Nepal, Colombia, Mozambique, Israel, and Australia. You could not attend this conference, unless your name was Michael Levin, and not be struck with the conclusion that the women's movement is truly a worldwide phenomenon and not likely to go away. It is indeed a social revolution of unprecedented magnitude that has only just begun.

What a pity that the readers of COMMENTARY were deprived of an accurate appraisal of the conference. But then again, COMMENTARY has never been sympathetic to women's concerns.

BERNICE R. SANDLER
Executive Director
Project on the Status and
Education of Women
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I find it hard to believe that Michael Levin and I attended the same conference. Of course, I went to Nairobi with an open mind and open eyes, eager to learn about the status of the world's women, while Mr. Levin went wearing the same ideological blinders he has worn throughout his career of debunking the women's movement. Only the lazy journalist or the anti-feminist could conclude that the forces of extremism won in Nairobi.

Extremist rhetoric often did monopolize the open spaces of the university campus as well as the so-called "Peace Tent," but the real work of Nairobi took place in the more than 1,000 workshops where women who had organized to solve women's problems came to share their expertise. The victory of Nairobi was that women *were* able to overcome differences of ideology, class, race, religion, etc. to find common themes.

I am truly sorry that Mr. Levin missed the conference.

MIMI ALPERIN
Co-Leader, AJC Delegation
to Nairobi
American Jewish Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carrying COMMENTARY press credentials, Michael Levin went to Nairobi for the UN conference and the NGO Forum '85. I was there also as one of the twenty-three-member American Jewish Committee delegation to the NGO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLISH-JEWISH STUDIES
An Appeal for Support

The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies was founded in Oxford following the International Conference on Polish-Jewish Relations in Modern History held at Somerville College, Oxford, September 1984. The scholars present on that occasion who had come from Israel, Poland, South Africa, Western Europe and North America decided to create a permanent institution in which the history and culture of Polish Jews could be examined in a scholarly and dispassionate manner. In addition, The American Foundation for Polish-Jewish Studies, which is associated with the Institute in Oxford, has recently been established in Boston.

The aim of the Institute is to further research into Polish Jewry on an interdisciplinary basis, and to make the results available to the public by means of lectures, seminars, conferences, a variety of publications and documentary films. To this end the Institute has established close links with scholars representing a number of disciplines, such as: history, sociology, anthropology, folklore, linguistics, literature and politics. The Institute has already been cooperating with universities and academic institutions in Israel, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere to achieve this goal. Thanks to this cooperation the Institute has been able to establish an international annual, POLIN: *A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, with a distinguished editorial board, to be published by Blackwells in Oxford. In addition, the Institute and the Foundation intend:

- to facilitate academic exchanges between the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Israel and Poland;
- to sponsor international conferences;
- to translate scholarly literature in East European and Jewish languages into English;
- to publish the proceedings of the Oxford Conference of 1984 and those of future conferences which have already been planned in Cracow (1986), Rome (1987), Jerusalem (1988) and an annual conference in Oxford;
- to create a fund for Judaica scholars and students wishing to visit Poland or perhaps other countries in Eastern Europe for language study, to use archives, libraries and museums, to teach at universities;
- to create a fund for scholarships and grants for Polish and other East European scholars and students wishing to visit Oxford, Jerusalem, New York and elsewhere to learn Hebrew and/or Yiddish and to take up Jewish studies;
- to establish an annual Emmanuel Ringelblum Memorial Lecture at Oxford University in cooperation with Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which will bring to Oxford leading scholars in the field of Holocaust Studies.

All these activities require financial support. We very much hope you will contribute generously to a venture from which we believe Jewish scholars, students and indeed Jews of all walks of life have a great deal to gain.

The American Foundation for Polish-Jewish Studies in Boston is already registered as a nonprofit corporation and all contributions are fully tax deductible. In order to achieve their goals, the Institute and the Foundation require an endowment of $1—1.5 million. This will enable them to spend $100,000 per annum towards all the projects listed above. In this context it should be stressed that the Foundation needs "seed money" in order to raise an endowment of that scale.

We, the undersigned, express our support for this appeal:

MORRIS B. ABRAM, Honorary President, American Jewish Committee
SALO W. BARON
Professor of Jewish History, Literature and Institutions, Columbia University
YEHUDA BAUER
Jonah M. Machover Professor of Holocaust Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
SIR ISAIAH BERLIN
Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory; Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford
SHMUEL ETTINGER
Professor of Modern History; Chairman, Center for Research and Documentation on East European Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN
Associate National Director, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
MAURICE FRIEDBERG
Head of Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign
JERRY GOODMAN
Executive Vice-Chairman, National Conference on Soviet Jewry
DAVID M. GORDIS
Executive Vice President, American Jewish Committee
OSCAR HANDLIN
Carl M. Loeb University Professor, Harvard University
DAVID S. LANDES
Coolidge Professor of History and Professor of Economics, Harvard University
WALTER LAQUEUR
Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University
RICHARD PIPES
Frank B. Baird, Jr. Professor of History, Harvard University
NORMAN PODHORETZ
Editor, *Commentary*, New York
PETER PULZER
Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration; Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford
JEHUDA REINHARZ
Richard Koret Professor of Modern Jewish History; Director, Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry, Brandeis University, Boston
HENRY ROSOVSKY
Lewis P. & Linda L. Geyser University Professor; Fellow of Harvard College, Harvard University
BENJAMIN I. SCHWARTZ
Leroy B. Williams Professor of History and Political Science, Harvard University
E. DONALD SHAPIRO
The Joseph Solomon Distinguished Professor of Law; Former Dean, New York Law School
CHONE SHMERUK
Chairman, Center for Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jews, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER
Nobel Laureate for Literature, New York
JACQUES TORCZYNER
Member, Executive, World Zionist Organization, New York
ADAM B. ULAM
Gurney Professor of History and Political Science; Director, The Russian Research Center, Harvard University

THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR POLISH-JEWISH STUDIES
BOSTON

President:
Abraham Brumberg
Washington
Vice-Presidents:
Professor Leszek Kolakowski
Oxford/Chicago
Dr. Antony Polonsky
London
Treasurer:
Robert Trevisani
Boston
Secretary:
Leo Naughton
Boston

The American Foundation for Polish-Jewish Studies
One Post Office Square, Suite 3700
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of: $_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Please send me more information about your activities ☐

Please introduce my name on your mailing list ☐

INSTITUTE FOR POLISH-JEWISH STUDIES, OXFORD

President:
Dr. Antony Polonsky
London
Vice-Presidents:
Dr. David Patterson
Oxford
Dr. Zbigniew A. Pelczynski
Oxford
Treasurer:
Professor Norman Stone
Oxford
Executive Director:
Maciej Jachimczyk
Oxford

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Forum. His perceptions of and reactions to the meetings are so unlike mine that it seems we were in a different place at a different time.

Mr. Levin describes Forum '85 as a coming together of "13,000 radical feminists." I find that description outrageous. Of the hundreds of women I encountered in Nairobi only a small percentage could be characterized as radical by anyone's responsible definition.

"The main message of the forum," states Mr. Levin, is that "South Africa, Israel, the United States, and men are among them the cause of all the world's misery." Mr. Levin substantiates this thesis on the basis of three forum workshops among the 1,100 offered. Only a very small percentage of workshops were political and divisive, and those could usually be anticipated on the basis of subject and sponsorship, and dealt with accordingly.

If Mr. Levin was present at any of the substantive workshops, his article doesn't reflect it. He might then have been moved to write about the brave Iranian women who decry their government's oppressive policies that, for example, deny them the right to move freely throughout society; or the dialogue among Christian, Jewish, and Muslim women sharing concerns about the conflicts between their religious traditions and modernity; or the fragile aging women in some parts of Africa without property or marital rights who can be arbitrarily turned out into the countryside. The list is long and stirring. No one at any of these workshops dealing with these issues held Israel, the United States, men, or South Africa, for that matter, responsible for these problems and grievances. On the contrary, the emphasis was on change via education, policy, and the law, in one's own country. These concerns were expressed by women from places as different as Houston and Jakarta, Nagoya and Delhi, Israel and Norway, Iran and Canada.

In another statement Mr. Levin writes: "But if any strand ran through the entire forum, and indeed gave it unity, it was hatred of Israel." To be sure, there was distressing, irresponsible anti-Israeli rhetoric; but I find it unbelievable that Mr. Levin interprets that rhetoric as being *the* thread that kept 1,100 workshops and 13,000 women united. To support this point he again cites three workshops whose subjects and sponsorship should have made even the most unsophisticated among us wary. As a matter of fact, many experienced a more open attitude toward Israel and Zionism than had been anticipated, especially on the part of African women. At one workshop I attended there was a noisy, disruptive Palestinian response to Israeli-Jewish participation. Through the efforts of two concerned and caring Kenya women, order was restored. Others had similar experiences. It was not hatred that bound the forum participants despite these occasional disruptions; it was a commonality of concerns.

Mr. Levin concedes (grudgingly?) that the final Forward-Looking Strategies document which was unanimously passed addresses "women's issues" (his quotation marks, not mine) and eliminates any reference to Zionism. He admonishes us, however, not to consider this a success. If not a success, it was at least an achievement; some things are better now than they were at the earlier women's conferences five and ten years ago.

Could it be that Michael Levin, carrying COMMENTARY credentials, went to Nairobi to prove his (COMMENTARY's?) own thesis rather than to report on what happened? COMMENTARY represents a particular point of view. When facts are distorted to reinforce that point of view, the magazine's credibility is diminished.

ELAINE WISHNER
Wilmette, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Had I not personally spoken with Michael Levin in Nairobi, reading "What Nairobi Wrought" would make me wonder whether he and I attended the same conference. Was there an oversupply of anti-Americanism, PLO venom, and UN rhetoric in Nairobi? Absolutely. But to assert that "the more important events were to be expected not at the forum but at the world conference" misses the significance of the gathering, and to claim that "if any strand ran through the entire forum, and indeed gave it unity, it was hatred of Israel" is fallacious.

For the women who came to Nairobi it was Forum '85, not the official conference, where the action was. (Women know better than to rely on governments to vindicate their rights.) The forum planners anticipated that 6,000 women would attend. Nearly 14,000 registered, and another 6,000 from different parts of Kenya as well as delegates to the official conference attended individual events. Mr. Levin tells us: "It cost a lot of money to bring 13,000 radical feminists to Africa and the forum was financed from quite prestigious sources," citing prominent American foundations. More than half the attendees didn't have to be imported because they were African. The prestigious sources that funded them included the Kenyan Organizing Committee and individual Nairobi women who brought rural women to the conference by selling memorabilia and running bake sales to raise transportation money and the $10.00 registration fee.

These African women had an agenda and it was not the Arab-Israeli conflict. There were several workshops at which PLO representatives who tried to raise the issue were silenced by African women insisting on keeping to the topics under discussion. And what were those topics? Agricultural development practices that ignore the rural women who raise most of the Third World's food and the kinds of development schemes that women want; violence against women; female circumcision and other health problems; and legal systems in which women are lifelong minors and family-law matters such as divorce and inheritance are governed by highly discriminatory religious law, to name only a very, very few.

I participated in Forum '85 with a twenty-three-member delegation from the American Jewish Committee that met daily to discuss the workshops each of us had attended that day. It was our consensus that of the more than 1,000 workshops, approximately 10 percent were either focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict or disrupted by those who wanted to discuss it. Of the workshops I attended, the PLO issue was raised in only one. Given his own interests, perhaps Mr. Levin deliberately selected those workshops where hatred of Israel was the topic. It was certainly not the unifying theme of the forum.

The women I know who went to Nairobi did so with the expectation that the official conference would be a typical UN spectacle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the hope that in the unofficial conference, women apart from their governments could limit the polemics that marred the two previous forums and stick to the issues we chose for ourselves. We did it.

LYNN HECHT SCHAFRAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one of the 2,000-plus American women present in Nairobi, I read Michael Levin's article with great interest, and with growing anger. Virtually none of the women I have spoken to since my return, including many of those who went to Nairobi as representatives of Jewish organizations, share his negative evaluation of the conferences. It is clear that he is negative about Nairobi because he is hostile to what it was trying to accomplish—equal rights for women.

His anti-feminist bias becomes quite obvious in his attacks on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and on the Forward-Looking Strategies document adopted by consensus by delegates from 157 nations. He characterizes the Strategies document as anti-family and cites as proof its refusal to recognize a "biological basis" to the distribution of sex roles. He labels "anti-democratic" the Convention's demand that governments "take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices which constitute discrimination against women . . ." I had always thought that it was the essence of democracy to use laws to change conditions that we deemed inequitable. . . .

I was particularly intrigued by Mr. Levin's criticism of Sarah Doron, the head of the Israeli delegation, and of Maureen Reagan, who headed the American delegation. Doesn't the fact that both of these women, neither of whom can possibly be accused of being anti-Israel or anti-U.S., viewed Nairobi as a success, say something to us? To me, it says that they shared a commitment to women's rights and to women's advancement that is not felt by Mr. Levin.

CAROL LEIMAS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a frequent visitor to Kenya's beautiful capital Nairobi who happened to be on the spot during the recent UN women's conference, I should like to comment on Michael Levin's article.

Mr. Levin is certainly correct in describing the nauseating aura of intense anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism which charged the very air during the conference, especially in Forum '85 and its workshops. This was sickening to any observer who had not previously witnessed this outrageous phenomenon which prevails at any routine UN conference. But there were also several silver linings to this heavy cloud which, at least partly, balance the score.

First, the Kenya government is to be congratulated upon doing a splendid job in keeping the conference as much as possible on the course charted for it, namely, to emphasize women's problems in the Third World, and in suppressing in many cases the excesses planned by the PLO and other Communist fellow-travelers who had succeeded in hijacking similar conferences in Copenhagen and Mexico City.

Second, U.S. Ambassador Alan Keyes emerged at the conference as a man of great integrity and principle. It was he who rose at the final session to declare that no matter how often the lie is repeated that Zionism equals racism, it remains a lie. . . .

Third, and most important from the Jewish point of view, the conference was an unforgettable experience in bringing together, in great and warm fellowship and mutual inspiration, hundreds of Jewish women from all corners of the world, ready to fight for Jewish honor. These delegates met daily in Vermont Hall, the social hall of the local Orthodox synagogue of the Nairobi Hebrew Congregation, for their briefing sessions. Furthermore, Friday night and Saturday morning services were always followed by Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush get-togethers. Hundreds of women delegates were constantly in attendance. I had the privilege—as I have had over the last twenty years—of delivering sermons at these services, during which I emphasized the prominent role which women play in Judaism. . . .

It was a tremendous inspiration to see these brave and valiant Jewish women troop out day after day to meeting after meeting where they were certain to face irrational, hate-crazed outbursts from Arab and Communist women, and where they would do their best to answer these attacks. They certainly did an outstanding and highly admirable job in upholding the honor of Israel and of Judaism in general, and should be highly commended by Jews everywhere. . . .

These experiences certainly taught another important lesson: Jewish delegates to any such conferences must be thoroughly briefed and educated in the nature of the problems and attacks they will have to face. . . .

By the way, the Nairobi conference spawned another remarkable "dividend" for the Jewish community as a whole. The B'nai B'rith delegates who attended the conference inspired the formation of a local Kenyan B'nai B'rith lodge which was formed on the spot. I am proud to have been nominated its first president, and suggested as its name Harambee Lodge, after the Swahili word for "pulling-together, cooperating." . . .

[DR.] MANFRED R. LEHMANN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It being improper and/or irrelevant, often even in conservative and neoconservative circles, to point out that feminists *actually* mean what they say and to carry feminist ideas to their logical and ultimate conclusions, I welcome Michael Levin's article.

It should be obvious—at least to readers of COMMENTARY who have studied the issue in any depth and detail—that modern feminism is not only anti-democratic but inherently totalitarian. Given its view of man and society, it could not be otherwise.

First, there is the basic feminist dogma of absolute cultural determinism: the belief that (in the words of Kate Millett, and echoed by Maureen Reagan) "the whole structure of male and female personality is entirely imposed by social conditioning"; that general disparities in sexual "roles" and behavior are totally or essentially the product of history and socialization and have little or nothing to do with the . . . interaction of biology with the . . . environment (which actually explains sexual differentiation).

Secondly, rooted in the myth of "conditioning," is the view of culture as "ideology" and the contention that society itself is "totalitarian." By the use of such neologisms as "sexism" and "sex-stereotyping," and the perverted and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sweeping definitions of such words as "discrimination," "oppression," "exploitation," "slavery," "bias," etc., feminists create a myth of an omnipotent, omnipresent "patriarchal ideology," a canard of social totalitarianism. To feminists, the whole of society and history, almost everything men and women and boys and girls do and say, is "sexist" and a form of male domination.

Thus, the concept of "sexism" and its cognates is synonymous with intrinsic sexual differentiation, with nature and existence. And the myth of a "patriarchal ideology," designed by men . . . in order to oppress and exploit women completely, is synonymous with life in a free and private society with a capitalist economy and democratic political system—for if men and women live in a democratic capitalistic society, or in any society that gives its people a modicum of privacy and freedom, the biological differences between the sexes will inevitably manifest themselves in general disparities in sexual roles and behavior and "sexism" will prevail in every area of life. . . .

Some people will admit that what I say is true of a "few feminists," or "some feminists," or of a "militant, extremist, radical fringe"—but not of feminism generally. This, in fact, is utter nonsense—albeit an expedient subterfuge. Mr. Levin is one of the people who understands this, which is surely why he makes a point of quoting Maureen Reagan. Her assertions make it clear that such views are not only espoused by virtually all doctrinaire feminists, but also by nearly all serious left-liberal and "liberal Republican" feminist sympathizers (though usually in diluted form, and often with no concrete and specific idea of the socio-political ramifications). They also reveal the absurdity of the opinion that feminism is somehow passé, or is about to expire, or is undergoing basic and evolutionary "moderation.". . .

SCOTT KUEHL
Green Bay, Wisconsin

MICHAEL LEVIN writes:

Like the curate's egg, the Nairobi conference, according to some of my correspondents, was excellent in parts. But I had not thought that was the issue. The issues, rather, were whether the goings-on I reported were typical of Nairobi, and if so, what were the Western democracies doing there?

As to the first, accusations of selectivity are just about the last weapons left in the feminists' dwindling armory. Critics of women's-studies courses are accused of overstating excesses; critics of quotas, of concentrating on horror stories. I am accused of doing both. But in fact, my main expository problem was compressing the notes I took at over 100 of the forum's 1,100 meetings—quite a fair sample. Additional descriptions of the ungovernable anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism I witnessed at ten or twenty other meetings would have amounted to nothing more than a Baedeker of offensiveness, lacking further informational value.

Ironically, Bernice Sandler's orthodox feminist view of Nairobi differs very little from mine. She sees the conference as having been dominated by apartheid—a question whose special bearing on women is somewhat obscure, to say the least. Straining to find variety in the concerns expressed, she falls back, among other topics, on "women in emergency situations in the Middle East." (What country was said to have created the emergency? Hint: its name begins with I.) And as the reader might expect, some of the groups she mentions, like the Northern California Black Women Physicians, are indeed radical, tending, for example, to blame alleged shortcomings in cancer treatment for black women (like everything else) on white male domination of society. Indeed, Bernice Sandler's litany of complaints, when it does not gerrymander the general concerns of society into "male" and "female" problems, largely revolves around the statistical underrepresentation of women in fields of public endeavor, a situation which feminists persistently blame on socialization and conspiracy. Inevitably, too, feminists like Carol Leimas wish to correct these circumstances through quotas and other forms of coercion, failing to understand that constitutional democracy (with which the UN Convention is inconsistent) preserves a sphere of privacy beyond the reach of even elected governments. Judging by their public pronouncements, feminists wish the single area of life unregulated by the government to be aborting fetuses.

Granted, there were a number of African women present at the forum—their chief reaction seemed to be bemusement—but few of them were grass-roots activists financed by bake sales. The 300-woman delegation from Rwanda, for instance, was funded entirely by the Rwandan government, even though Rwanda itself is abjectly poor even by African standards. What is more, those meetings which might be termed relatively unobjectionable were desultory and poorly attended. I recall a Caribbean woman telling a largely empty auditorium about the problems of farming in rural Dominica while her listless audience wandered in and out. No one present in Nairobi could doubt that its emotional center of gravity was the denunciation of the U.S., Israel, and the world created by men.

Thus we come to the second issue: even had the anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism been confined to the meetings I described, Nairobi would have been inexcusable. It astounds me that people like Lynn Hecht Schafran, who called a press conference to denounce the present Attorney General, should search out excuses for handmaidens of the PLO, and that Elaine Wishner should be so pleased that only a "small percentage" of the workshops featured "irresponsible anti-Israel rhetoric." Ultimately, this defense of Nairobi is quite like the idea now being offered in some quarters that Louis Farrakhan's "distressing" comments about Jews should not be allowed to obscure his valuable message about black economic self-sufficiency.

In assessing the question of radicalism, it is helpful to keep some of Scott Kuehl's points in mind. Radicalism is not a function of one's style of dress or public deportment or institutional affiliation; it is a function of one's beliefs and the policies that follow therefrom. By these standards, feminism is inherently radical, and must aim at (with, let it be added, no hope of final success) a complete transformation of human life. This remains true even if feminists have by now organized themselves into groups with uncontentious names, and even if feminist ideas are given voice by the daughter of a conservative President. By precisely the same token, the affinity of feminists for other radical causes, and their tolerance for upheaval in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

In the world of ideas, no other magazine comes close.

COMMENTARY 165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022

I want to discover Commentary's world of ideas. Please enter my twelve-month subscription for the regular price of $33.00.

☐ My check for $33.00 is enclosed. ☐ Bill me

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

name of revolutionary goals, is entirely predictable.

In answer to Carol Leimas's question: yes, it says a great deal to me that Maureen Reagan and Sarah Doron—but most of all that you and other American, female, Jewish correspondents—view Nairobi as a success or an "achievement."

The Networks & the Hostages

To the Editor of Commentary:

David Bar-Illan's article, "Israel, the Hostages, and the Networks" [September 1985] documents yet another case of a baffling and most destructive fever—the extraordinary addiction of Western cultures to self-reproach, self-hatred, and ultimately self-destruction. Under the pressure of the times, the disease threatens to become epidemic.

Useful as Mr. Bar-Illan's article is, it contains a significant and popular error on a collateral point. Commenting on the assertion that Israel's removal of Arab prisoners from Lebanon to Israel for obvious security reasons violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, he remarks:

> To compare this kind of infraction (if such it was) to the TWA hijacking was like comparing a traffic violation to murder. . . . Nor did anyone seem to note that the Israeli rescue of hostages at Entebbe, the international pursuit of Mengele, and virtually all the proposed retaliatory measures against the hijackers . . . were, and are, strictly speaking, violations of international law.

Mr. Bar-Illan's second sentence is mistaken. In all the episodes he mentions, the conduct at issue was entirely permissible under international law. International law has always recognized the right of a state in time of peace to use whatever force is reasonably necessary to cure another state's violent breach of international law which damages or threatens its interests, when peaceful remedies for the breach are unavailable. A classic example of such legal uses of force is the protection of citizens abroad exposed to dangers through the acts or negligence of another state, the situation both in Entebbe in 1976 and in Beirut more recently.

Eugene V. Rostow
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was in the audience at Yeshiva University some years ago when the Israeli pianist David Bar-Illan gave a brilliant classical concert. . . . Equally impressive is the writer David Bar-Illan. . . . The thesis of his article is evidently that because of the numerous atrocities committed especially against American citizens and property in Lebanon, a conveniently located scapegoat had to be selected for news consumption. And this scapegoat had to be Israel, which held and was prepared to release all its Shiite captives anyway. Mr. Bar-Illan makes his point effectively, short of saying that the anti-Israel campaign also had overtones of anti-Semitism.

Henry Regensteiner
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Very clearly and cogently, David Bar-Illan points out the ways in which the American television networks distorted various aspects of the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 and the subsequent terrorist theater which followed, in large part through media assistance, cooperation, and ignorance. He cites examples which demonstrate the clear prejudice against Israel, and, as well, the anti-American tilt of the media, especially the television networks. Certainly, there can be no doubt of television bias or the network efforts to blame Israel for the affair, and of course to insist that Israel, by holding some seven hundred-odd Shiites, was the key to the entire "problem.". . .

The networks are parts of large corporations designed to make money by purveying entertainment to the public which is paid for by companies with products and services they wish to sell. . . . A subsection of the business is devoted to gathering and presenting the news which must, like all other television activities, pay its way. . . . The "news" is a commodity of sorts which has to fill a certain time slot, regardless of the importance of what is being shown. . . .

The people who select, edit, and present the news have great public influence. . . . They pass judgment on convoluted political questions, on problems of ethics, taste, morality, and on legal matters without any of the qualifications which we would expect of people hired to teach such subjects in any institution of learning.

For some time, most journalists and their counterparts in radio and on television have been of the left-liberal persuasion in the political and social sense, and their reporting has been tinged perceptibly by this orientation, though this is not to suggest a conspiracy or plot to control our media. A few may be vicious at times, but generally speaking their views are simply the standard left-liberal position formed in their college years and unquestioned and unexamined since.

When such people contradict or assail the policies and views of those in government, this reflects, more than anything else, their lack of understanding of the problems as well as the fact that they bear no responsibility for their views and the consequences that flow from them.

We might try to educate them, but there is no certainty that this process would be successful in the money- and publicity-oriented world of television entertainment.

John E. Slaughter
Gainesville, Florida

To the Editor of Commentary:

David Bar-Illan's article on the conduct of the networks during the TWA hostage crisis underscores the sad reality that network executives and news producers subordinate factual accuracy and fairness to the sensationalism deemed necessary for good "showbiz." In giving primacy to putting on a good show for American living-room audiences, as demonstrated in the so-called reporting from the streets of Beirut, truth takes a back seat to fabrication and media-induced happenings. Thus, the viewer is treated to what passes on the networks as news but which is in fact no more than distorted or contrived film footage coupled with equally inaccurate "commentary"—e.g., ten-year-old ruins represented as current devastation . . . ; demonstrators who have been previously coached to wax hysterical for the camera; and planes, crowds, and corpses photographed repeatedly from different angles to give an inflated impression of their numbers. . . .

Television reporters and commentators seem intent on glorifying terrorists and police-state bullies as the architects of some brave new world. The plain fact is that, their bias aside, playing ball with the terrorists and other bullies is a necessary predicate to staging the show that passes as news.

While Mr. Bar-Illan's analysis of the illness is correct, he fails to provide a suitable remedy. At a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bare minimum, I propose that each network be required, in prime time, to provide weekly at least one hour to review its reporting of that week's news by a panel of media critics. I dismiss as inconsequential midnight exchanges every several months with an assembled audience moderated by Ted Koppel; perfunctory thirty-second readings of abridged pro and con letters on *60 Minutes*; and "in-house" network review boards. I propose critiques by outsiders knowledgeable about and representing varied views concerning the week's events. Such a panel . . . would be a step toward redressing complaints about inaccuracies and distortions. At least it would put so-called "television journalists" on notice that reckless, irresponsible, intentionally distorted and prejudiced reporting will be exposed not only in rare newspaper columns but before their own prime-time viewers.

ALAN L. DOOCHIN
Larchmont, New York

DAVID BAR-ILLAN writes:

I am grateful to Eugene V. Rostow for setting the record straight and disabusing me and, I am sure, many others of the notion that the Entebbe rescue mission and similar actions were in violation of international law. His remarks are especially welcome at this time, since there are many who still insist that the Israeli bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunis and the interception of the Egyptian airliner carrying the *Achille Lauro* terrorists were also such violations.

I hope my mistake serves to underline the danger of media distortions. Unfortunately, these media-enhanced errors are not inconsequential. For a whole decade we were bombarded with assertions, presented and accepted as indisputable, that the "root cause" of OPEC policies and the resultant energy crisis was the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "Palestinian problem," and that oil shortages and high prices would become disastrous unless the U.S. pressured Israel to make "meaningful concessions." This became the political catechism of four administrations, conducing to, among other things, a lopsided Camp David accord and the sale of AWACS and other sophisticated American weapons systems to Saudi Arabia. Only the coincidence of the Lebanon war and the oil glut exposed the absurdity of this shibboleth and put it to rest, at least temporarily.

With similar illogic, and notwithstanding the fact that the vast majority of terrorist acts in the world are unrelated to Israel and that most victims of terrorism in the Middle East are Arabs killed by Arabs, we are incessantly told that the "root cause" of terrorism is—what else?—the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem. This too has become political gospel, according to which combating terrorism is futile, since only settling the Palestinian problem—on Arab terms, of course—will bring an end to it.

In assessing the motives for these media attitudes, I tried to steer clear of facile allusions to "overtones of anti-Semitism" mentioned by Henry Regensteiner. But certain semantic habits have become so ingrained in media parlance that the temptation to discern more than just political hostility is understandable. During the *Achille Lauro* incident, for example, the anchormen on CNN kept referring to the hijackers as "commandos," and to the prisoners whose release they demanded—headed by a PLO gunman sentenced to prison in a democratic court of law for bashing the head of an infant in front of its father and then killing the father—as "Arab hostages held by Israel."

All of which makes Alan L. Doochin's suggestion particularly cogent, albeit more wishful than realistic. That the media have become as powerful and influential in determining the course of our lives as any branch of the government is a given, if for no other reason than that, as John E. Slaughter points out, "the people who select, edit, and present the news have great public influence." But unlike the institutions of government, they are subject to virtually no checks and balances. A panel of critics subjecting the networks to scrutiny on prime time would not only help combat ignorance and irresponsibility; it should become a popular show by giving the public an opportunity to vent its frustration and anger vicariously at the media's arrogance.

But to expect the networks to overcome their arrogance long enough to contemplate such a show is, I fear, an impossible dream.

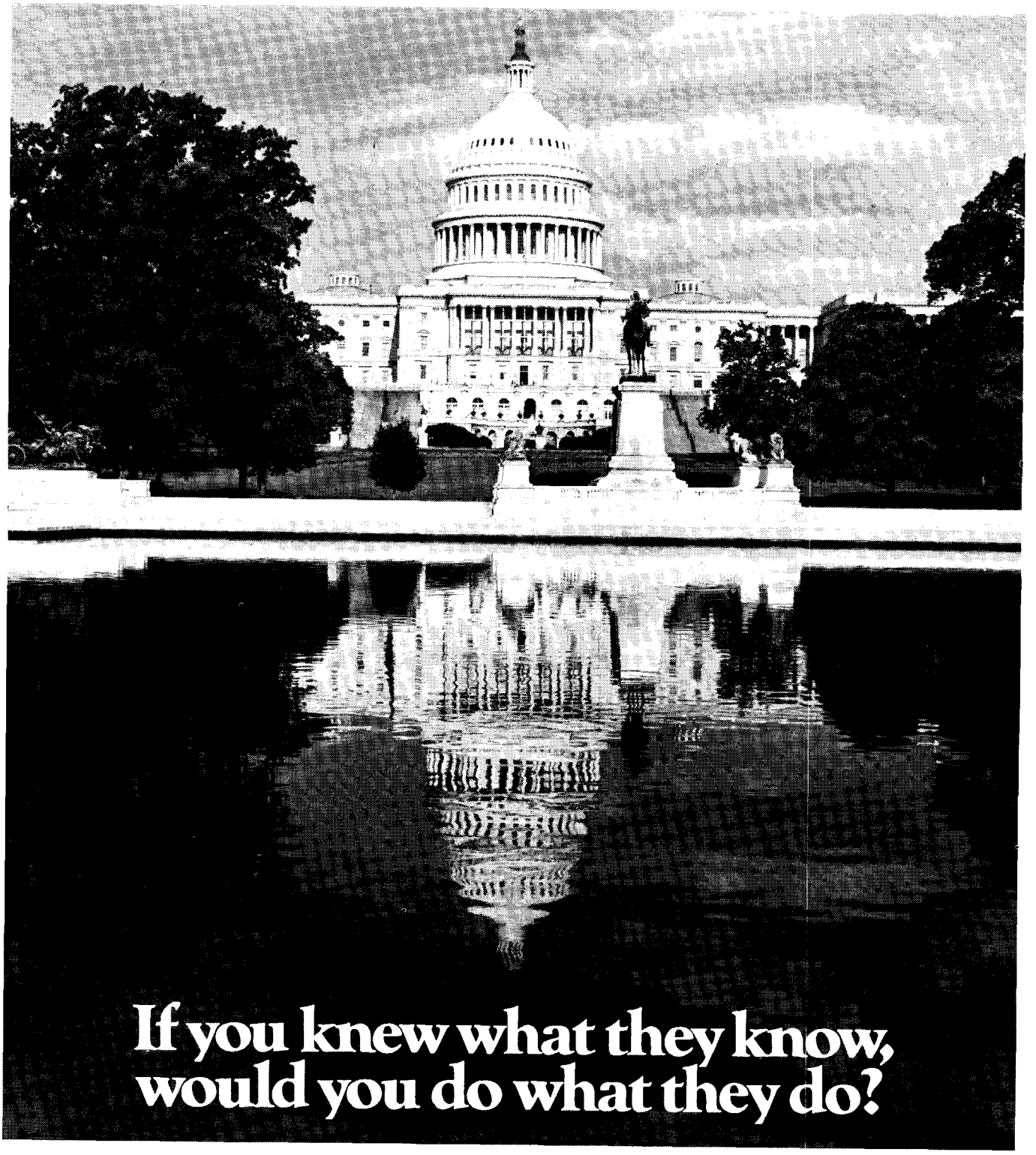
Colonialism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What can Joseph Epstein ["One Cheer for E.M. Forster," September 1985] possibly mean by writing that E.M. Forster's dislike of the "Anglo-Indians" (*A Passage to India*) "came through accompanied by serious political consequences"? Mr. Epstein goes on to quote Paul Johnson to the effect that the novel undermined "belief in British superiority and maturity." Is the "serious political consequence" that Britain did not put forth the effort (which was in any case beyond it, materially and morally) to maintain rule over India after 1947? Isn't that nonsense? At a time when the Western episode of colonialism is over, when no Western country has colonies, and all consider themselves better off without them, what would lead anyone to take up the defense of colonialism and regret its demise? Only, I am afraid, a narrow and distorted view of India, and one that spoils what is otherwise a sensitive and insightful essay.

NATHAN GLAZER
Cambridge, Massachusetts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



If you knew what they know, would you do what they do?

More than any other single force on earth, America's foreign policy will determine what kind of world we and our children live in.

And every one of us can influence that policy. That's what the nonprofit, nonpartisan Foreign Policy Association is all about: working to develop the kind of informed public opinion that will help our government make enlightened, responsible foreign policy decisions.

Last year alone, more than 250,000 Americans across the nation—in discussion groups, classrooms and community centers—participated in our *Great Decisions* program.

The *Great Decisions* book provides objective background on eight key foreign policy issues. Discussions help you form your views; you express them on opinion ballots, which FPA presents to Washington officials.

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION 1918

To find out more, call us now at (212) 481-8450. Or write to Foreign Policy Association, Department A, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Donations are fully tax deductible.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Behind the Black-Jewish Split

Glenn C. Loury

RELATIONS between American blacks and Jews have become strained in recent years. These two groups, long allies in the historic struggle for social justice in this country, find themselves now at loggerheads over issues which each perceives as vital to its interests. Demagogues have magnified these differences; distrust and ill-will are now much more common in our dealings than was the case two decades ago. Efforts have been made to repair the damage, to restore the old comity but mostly in vain. And just beneath the overt expressions of disappointment and disagreement one senses that there are feelings of betrayal, ingratitude, and disloyalty. Some blacks, it would appear, feel betrayed by Jewish opposition to quotas, by Israel's relationship with South Africa, by the advent of a "Jews Against Jackson" committee. Some Jews seem to view black support for the PLO as ingratitude in the face of the contributions to the struggle for civil rights which Jews have made over the years, and are alarmed by the reluctance of black political figures to denounce Louis Farrakhan—a reluctance which to them appears a tacit acceptance of black anti-Semitism.

Some of the problems between the groups go back many decades. For example, due to the process of residential segregation and ethnic succession in urban areas, blacks often found themselves moving into neighborhoods which had previously been Jewish, renting from Jewish landlords, buying from Jewish merchants. Tenants and landlords, buyers and merchants naturally have a certain opposition of interests, and that opposition is magnified if each tends to be predominantly of a distinct group, and if there are clear differences of economic class between them. Many blacks perceived these relationships as exploitative, and undoubtedly in some cases they were. Many Jews looked on their black patrons—poorer, sometimes recently arrived from the South—with fear, or disdain. James Baldwin was already writing about *this* black-Jewish problem in the 1940's.*

Similarly, the influx of poorer blacks into Jewish residential areas created problems for many Jews, who found themselves victims of criminal offenses perpetrated by young black men, or who became gripped by the fear of such victimization. Elderly Jews, less mobile than their younger brethren, found themselves trapped in their apartments, afraid to venture onto the street, and blaming the "*schvartzes*"—the blacks—for their plight. Jewish boys attending public schools with blacks would have their lunch money taken, or be chased home by tougher black youths at the end of the day. Norman Podhoretz was writing about this—his "Negro problem"†—nearly a quarter of a century ago (and well before even a hint of a neoconservative critique of blacks' public claims had emerged).

So there have always been tensions, arising out of fear, envy, and resentment of exploitation. Yet in years past such inevitable difficulties as these were not allowed to obscure what was a deeper, more fundamental commonality of interests between the two groups—their shared revulsion for and struggle against officially sanctioned racism and discrimination; their leaders' shared commitment to a common agenda for American public life. It is this absence of shared public visions, however distinct our private beliefs and values have always been, which to my mind represents what is new (and ironic) about the current state of black-Jewish relations. For the structural, economic basis for tension between the groups has diminished substantially from what it was twenty years ago—inner-city landlords and merchants are no longer mainly Jews, and (outside of New York City) those neighborhoods in which Jews were likely to have unfavorable experiences with their black neighbors have mostly vanished with the upward mobility and suburbanization of the Jewish population. Moreover, the collective effort to make it impossible that bigotry might find an honorable place in American public life has largely succeeded. Yet in the aftermath of this

GLENN C. LOURY, professor of political economy at Harvard, is spending this year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. The present essay is based on an address given by Mr. Loury to a Conference on Black-Jewish Relations held in November at the University of the District of Columbia, and will be included in a forthcoming volume of conference papers.

* "The Harlem Ghetto: Winter 1948," COMMENTARY, February 1948.

† "My Negro Problem—And Ours," COMMENTARY, February 1963.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shared victory, and with a diminished immediacy of the interpersonal conflicts between individual blacks and Jews, there seem to be more bad blood and fewer common visions between the groups now than ever before.

I submit that there are two primary reasons for this state of affairs. The first I associate, though perhaps not in the expected way, with the advent and diffusion through our polity of racially preferential employment and admissions policies. From its very inception, affirmative action—at least in the sense of racial preference—has been a policy at once avidly embraced by blacks and reflexively distrusted by Jews. (I say this knowing full well that many Jews support affirmative action in this sense and many blacks oppose it. But broadly my generalization seems true.) Blacks have, on the whole, seen the use of quotas in employment and education as a necessary and just recompense for the wrongs of history. Jews have feared such practices, seeing in them an echo of the anti-Jewish quotas of the past and a threat to their standing in the professions.

But I think the issue of affirmative action has exacerbated the black-Jewish rift for deeper, more fundamental and intractable reasons than this. Nathan Glazer has persuasively argued that affirmative action ought to become less divisive for blacks and Jews since now many Jews (namely, Jewish women) benefit directly from the policy, and because as the Jewish occupational profile has moved away from teaching and the local civil services, the direct threat to Jewish interests posed by affirmative action has diminished.* Moreover, as the practice of affirmative action and racial preference has become broadly entrenched in American society, opposition to it on the political level has become so widespread that it is difficult to single out Jewish Americans as particular "offenders" in this regard.

One can certainly hope that Glazer is right. Yet I maintain that, much more important than the direct conflicts of interest around the affirmative-action issue are the symbolic and ideological differences between the groups which this policy brings to the fore, together with the kinds of asymmetrical relations among intellectual elites in the two groups which it fosters. That is, the policy of racial preference forces blacks and Jews publicly to confront their very different understandings of the American experience.

RACIAL preference to many blacks finds its essential rationale in an interpretation of history: that blacks have been wronged by American society in such a way that justice now requires they receive special consideration. Yet this reparations argument immediately raises the question: why do the wrongs of this particular group and not those of others deserve recompense? While more or less plausible responses to this query have been offered, no amount of recounting the unique sufferings attendant on the slave experience can make the question go away. For it is manifestly the case that many Americans are descended from forebears who had, indeed, suffered discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of hostile majorities both here and in their native lands. Yet these Americans on the whole have no claim to the public acknowledgment and ratification of their past suffering, as do blacks under affirmative action. The institution of this policy, rationalized in this way, therefore implicitly confers special *public* status on the historic injustices faced by its beneficiary groups, and hence devalues, implicitly, the injustices endured by others.

The public character of this process of acknowledgment and ratification is central to my argument. We are a democratic, ethnically heterogeneous polity. Racial preferences become issues in local, state, and national elections; they are the topic of debate in corporate boardrooms and university faculty meetings; their adoption and maintenance require public consensus, notwithstanding the role that judicial decree has played in their propagation. Therefore, the public consensus required for the broad use of such preferences results, *de facto,* in the complicity of every American in a symbolic recognition of extraordinary societal guilt and culpability regarding the plight of a particular group of citizens. And failure to embrace the consensus in favor of such practices invites the charge of insensitivity to the wrongs of the past or, indeed, the accusation of racism.

But perhaps most important, the public discourse surrounding racial preference inevitably leads to comparisons among the sufferings of different groups—an exercise in what one might call "comparative victimology." Was the anti-Asian sentiment in the Western states, culminating in the Japanese internments during World War II, "worse" than the discrimination against blacks? Were the restrictions and attendant poverty faced by Irish immigrants to Northeastern cities a century ago "worse" than those confronting black migrants to those same cities some decades later? And ultimately, inevitably, was the Holocaust a more profound evil than chattel slavery?

Such questions are, of course, unanswerable, if for no other reason than that they require us to compare degrees of suffering and extents of moral outrage as experienced internally, subjectively, privately, by different peoples. There is no neutral vantage point from which to take up such a comparison.

Yet many critics of racial preference can be heard to say "our suffering has been as great"; and many defenders of racial quotas for blacks have become ". . . tired of hearing about the Holocaust." These are enormously sensitive mat-

* See, for example, his article, "On Jewish Forebodings," COMMENTARY, August 1985.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ters, going to the heart of how each group defines its collective identity. James Baldwin, writing in the late 1960's on this subject, declared what many blacks believe: "One does not wish to be told by an American Jew that his suffering is as great as the American Negro's suffering. It isn't, and one knows it isn't from the very tone in which he assures you that it is." And when, in 1979, Jesse Jackson visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, he deeply offended many Jews with what he may have considered a conciliatory remark—that he now better understood ". . . the persecution complex of many Jewish people that almost invariably makes them overreact to their own suffering, because it is so great." By forcing into the open such comparative judgments concerning what amount to sacred historical meanings for the respective groups, the policy of racial preference has fostered deeper, less easily assuaged divisions than could ever have been produced by a "mere" conflict of material interests.

Moreover, the public debate over quotas brings into the open implicit historical comparisons of the extent to which different groups have been able to cope with the adversities of being marginal in American life. The idea that such preference is not only just, but necessary for some groups, seems to imply that they are less able than those coming before to adapt to the vicissitudes of life in our nation. Stories of despised immigrant outsiders, barely speaking the language and meeting resistance at every turn, but nonetheless overcoming the barriers and rising to middle-class status, are a commonplace of American folklore. And who can say with certainty that the barriers facing East European immigrants at the turn of the century were substantially less than those facing blacks (or Southeast Asian immigrants) today? When confronted with the continued, dramatic inequality experienced by some black Americans today, some two decades after the civil-rights revolution—an inequality which figures prominently in the argument that preferential policies are necessary as well as right—many ethnic Americans (and not only Jews) wonder why "they" can't do what "we" did.

Here, too, it is not important for my argument that plausible answers to such questions can be given—they certainly can be. What is critical is that the questions ever arise in the first place, for they are painful questions for blacks to contemplate. Nothing can be more calculated to incite a black audience to riotous objection than the claim that "The Jews [or Asians, or West Indians, or Irish Catholics] overcame racism and discrimination. Why can't you?" The most frequent response —"But they didn't suffer as we did"—throws us back into the dilemmas of "comparative victimology" discussed above. Such inevitably divisive public discourse is unavoidable once we undertake to practice preferential treatment based on historic injustice. This practice forces us to make *public* comparisons of and judgments about historical experiences of the utmost importance to each group's *private* sense of identity, pride, and historical violation.

THERE are also more prosaic reasons why this policy should be implicated in current black-Jewish difficulties. One consequence of affirmative action has been that large numbers of middle-class, well-educated, upwardly-mobile, and racially-conscious blacks have been thrust into highly competitive academic and professional environments in which Jews have flourished for decades, and in which Jews are vastly "overrepresented" in comparison with their proportion of the population. In such competition blacks often fare poorly. Jewish interest in and excellence at scholarly and professional pursuits are long-standing and well known, while black "underrepresentation" and marginal performance in these pursuits are also prominent features of the contemporary American social scene. When admissions to, say, law school are made in part to assure that blacks are well represented (assuming that the non-racial criteria of selection are actually predictive of performance after admission), a logically necessary consequence is that the average level of performance of those blacks admitted within the entering class will be lower than would have been the case absent racial preference. Another result is that, since "marginal" Jewish admissions are very few, those Jews admitted will exhibit, on the average, higher performance than would have obtained absent the quota.

The fact is that in many law schools (and we must not underestimate the importance of law schools as the crucible of character formation for tomorrow's political elites), black students on the whole cluster near the bottom of their classes, and Jewish students cluster near the top. Similar patterns are to be observed in academic performance at elite colleges and universities. This generalization is not without exceptions, and certainly need not reflect any inherent differences in individual capacities, but it is nonetheless broadly true. The asymmetries of power, status, and security inherent in this situation invite attitudes of condescension and contempt, of resentment and envy—and this among the future leaders and opinion-makers of each group. These attitudes are only compounded when school administrations attempt to respond to such inequities in performance through, for example, racial quotas on Law Review appointments and the like.

Thus, it seems to me that the advent of racially preferential policies has created a new basis for black-Jewish enmity, quite apart from the opposition of economic interests which one naturally looks to as the source of the difficulty. This new conflict is more dangerous because it involves essentials of human existence which are not easily

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

compensated, if lost—dignity, self-respect, and the public acknowledgment and ratification of private, historical meanings.

THE idea of *public visions in conflict*, which in essence is the theme of my argument, points to what I see as the other principal source of our current difficulties—what might be called conflicting nationalisms. It is curious that this should be so among two groups as thoroughly American as Jews and blacks. Yet two parallel developments have brought this long dormant source of tension between the groups into full flower. Among Jews, the political ideology of Zionism has given birth in the Middle East to a new, specifically Jewish nation-state, continuing to live in conflict with its neighbors but representing a beacon of hope and source of identity for all world Jewry. Among blacks the renewed nationalistic assertions of the Black Power movement of the 60's have now crystallized into a broadly embraced if somewhat nebulously defined Pan-African political identity, inducing blacks to see themselves as a "Third World people," analogous in their relations with Americans of European descent to the position of the nonwhite peoples of the developing countries vis-à-vis their former European colonizers.

There are interesting parallels in these two developments. In both cases the question arises as to which loyalty—that to the American nation or that to the "tribal homeland"—takes precedence. The question is seldom put so crudely; and often it can be said that the interests of the U.S., properly construed, are wholly compatible with the security interests of Israel, or with the interests of South African blacks in gaining their freedom. But the fact is that, when attempting to influence the policies of our government on matters directly involving Israel or Africa, Jews and blacks act out of motives which go beyond the desire to foster American national interests as they see them. Moreover, how they come to see American interests is, in the long run, surely affected by their ethnic loyalties.

There is nothing necessarily wrong or pernicious in such inevitable conflicts of loyalty—they were observed, for example, among Americans of German and Japanese descent in the years leading to World War II. Sadly, our country has not always exhibited an equal tolerance for such conflict. Self-consciously German Americans were not, after all, rounded up and imprisoned as security threats after war broke out in 1941, while Japanese Americans, the majority of whom were born and raised in this country, were. And many blacks would today claim that their efforts to shape American policy on matters affecting the Third World have met with more questions and a less open reception in the halls of power than have Jewish efforts to lobby on matters affecting Israel.

In any event, the fact is that both blacks and Jews, as American citizens with profound concerns about our foreign involvements, have entered the political arena with the objective of influencing our policy. And this has become a major source of conflict between the groups.

Here, too, the problem has a surface dimension and a deeper, symbolic dimension. On the surface, resentments arise because of disparities in resources, power, and influence between the groups. We sometimes find ourselves on different sides of a policy struggle that only one group can win. A case in point is the Andrew Young affair, in which President Carter's UN Ambassador—the most influential and highest-ranking black ever to have held appointive office in our history, and one whose portfolio explicitly involved foreign-policy concerns—was fired for talking with the PLO in violation of official American policy, and (at least as is widely believed by blacks) at the insistence of American and Israeli Jews.

WITHOUT doubt this incident can be seen as a proximate cause of the recent deterioration of relations between the groups. Within weeks of the event two separate delegations of prominent black civil-rights leaders made pilgrimages to the Middle East and permitted themselves to be photographed in friendly embrace with Israel's mortal enemies, thus seeming to place the moral authority of the civil-rights struggle—a struggle in which Jewish Americans had figured prominently—at the disposal of Yasir Arafat's PLO. This was, obviously, deeply troubling to many Jews; it disturbed other Americans as well. Even some blacks could be heard to object when Joseph Lowery, head of Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference and leader of a delegation which included NAACP President Benjamin Hooks and Georgia State Senator Julian Bond, bestowed on the Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi an award of appreciation from American blacks called "The Decoration of Martin Luther King."

Yet this activity, however much one may disagree with its substance, is probably best understood as an effort by some black Americans to assert their right to participate in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy, an attempt to show that "two can play this game." Such events do not, in my view, go to the heart of the matter. Rather, this occurrence, and more recent ones of a similar kind, reflect a deeper conflict of vision between the elites of the two groups. With the development of a Third World, pan-national perspective among black elites, such conflict is inevitable, and I fear we will see much more of it. For at base, this emerging political identity among blacks, unlike its counterpart in Zionism among Jews, is profoundly anti-Western. It has been forged from the bitter harvest of frustrated black political aspirations in America. It rejects European intellectual and economic dominance, regards with serious

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doubt the most cherished of Western political values, and reflexively embraces anti-Western movements even when they clearly threaten black interests (as evidenced, for example, by the extent of black American support for and identification with the rise of the OPEC oil cartel).

Now Israel, notwithstanding its diverse population, is clearly a creature of the West—historically, culturally, politically, economically, militarily. This is surely one reason why virulent opposition to Israel is almost universal among the nonaligned and Third World nations in the United Nations, and why many black African nations, themselves once dominated and exploited, indeed enslaved, by Arabs, nonetheless reject associations with Israel from which (in the area of agricultural development, for example) they might gain a great deal. There is, therefore, something inexorable about black-Jewish conflict over the Middle East. For much of black elite opinion in this area is shaped by a sense of supranational political identity which, at its core, rejects the very civilization of which the Jewish state is the sole representative in that part of the world.

That black American intellectuals, when reflecting on the question of national identity, would arrive at ambivalent, divided conclusions—at once African and American, partaking of both the East and the West—should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with American history. Indeed, descendants of European Jews might well recognize such an ambivalence from their own past. A central fact of the black experience has been the need to accommodate oneself to the pervasive rejection which, for a century after slavery, was the experience of most blacks in American public life. Perhaps nothing better symbolizes this than the poignant struggles of black soldiers—in engagements from the Civil War to the Korean conflict—to have an equal opportunity to serve and die for the only country they had ever known. W.E.B. Du Bois, in *The Souls of Black Folks,* wrote lyrically of "this poor dark body, torn asunder" by the conflicting and unresolvable tensions of being nothing else but an American, and yet of never quite being accepted by one's countrymen as an American. Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa movement struck such a chord among blacks because it seemed to offer a dignified, if utopian, way out of Du Bois's dilemma. And on up to the current day—the appeal of and sympathy for Islam among a devoutly Christian people, the embrace (in some instances the manufacture) of an African cultural heritage which would be unrecognizable to our slave ancestors, the rewriting of world history to discover African antecedents of European accomplishment—all of these are attempts to find an identity for black Americans which is not contingent upon acceptance by whites.

So, in this still developing Pan-African conception of black national identity, blacks are *in* but not wholly *of* the West. It is to be expected therefore that their sympathies will lie with what most non-Westerners recognize as the "legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people" in the Middle East. It does not matter in this that such Pan-Africanism, looked at with detached rationality, may be a deeply flawed ideology, one rejected by many Africans themselves and which, though embraced by black intellectual elites, is foreign to the everyday experience and commonplace aspirations of rank-and-file black people. For it is a perspective which is gaining adherents among the black intelligentsia, and that is what seems to count. And its development is abetted by apartheid abroad, and by black poverty at home.

These are things which Jewish Americans may recognize and understand. Indeed, there are a few similarities here with the early phases of the development of Zionism. But understanding something is not the same as either accepting or changing it. I fear that the conflict among blacks and Jews is not likely soon to abate, notwithstanding the earnest efforts of so many people of good will. For it is the case today that our reflective and influential elites have come to order their experience, as Americans and as citizens of the world, in profoundly different ways.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Do We Still Need Europe?

Eliot A. Cohen

For an American to suggest that we should investigate our strategic interest in Europe can sound positively subversive—tantamount to repudiating our commitment to Europe altogether, or denying Europe's value to American security. Indeed, one can make a strong case against a too-frequent investigation of the roots of the American commitment to Europe, or for that matter of any well-established foreign policy; this stricture carries particular force when we speak of an alliance as old, as firmly established, and as much in the American national interest as NATO. And yet such a reappraisal is due, and overdue. For the world has changed in many ways since the victorious statesmen and generals of World War II, in a massive departure from American tradition, advanced the first arguments for the commitment of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers to the peacetime defense of Europe.

The most obvious changes have occurred in the strategic environment, i.e., in the balance of power between the West and the Soviet Union. Since the early 1950's, when the founders of the Atlantic alliance established the current structure and basic policies of NATO, the Soviet Union has achieved nuclear parity, developed an increasingly powerful navy, and secured overseas bases and clients (Cuba and Vietnam, for example) unimaginable in 1950. The Soviet Union has also found itself confronted by new strategic threats, particularly from China, where a close alliance has been replaced by a bitter and, it would appear, enduring enmity. These developments, and others—including the withering of the Soviet Union's purely ideological appeal to Third World states—all argue for a reassessment of America's own strategic position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and primarily in the central arena of confrontation, namely Europe.

Eliot A. Cohen is on leave from the department of government at Harvard to teach in the department of strategy at the Naval War College. (The views he expresses here do not necessarily represent those of the College.) Mr. Cohen is the author of *Citizens & Soldiers: The Dilemmas of Military Service* (Cornell). The present article, in different form, will appear in *Challenges to the Western Alliance*, edited by Andrew Siegel and Samuel F. Wells, Jr., both of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, to be published soon. Mr. Cohen would like to thank the Wilson Center for its kind cooperation.

A second reason for investigating America's strategic interest in Europe has to do with generational developments. The appearance of the "successor generation"—Americans and Europeans in their late thirties and early forties marked not by World War II and the Berlin crisis but by Vietnam and the student revolts of the 1960's—has given rise to anxious inquiries about the basis of the alliance. Writers on both sides of the Atlantic seeking to reassure their readers and themselves have maintained that, although the level of annoyance among the partners has increased over the past decade, the alliance remains secure, and precisely because it is in the strategic interest of the United States that it be so. Others, however, are not so sure.

Finally we see a debate among Americans themselves over the future prospects of NATO. The chronic low level of tension which Europeans have noticed has also led many American observers to conclude that the nature of the alliance has changed. Such firm friends of Europe as Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger have suggested that the time may have come to reduce, perhaps substantially, America's military commitments to the alliance. A spirited American debate has thus begun over the place of Europe in American foreign policy.

Regrettably, lively prose rather than careful analysis has characterized that debate. On the one hand, Jeffrey Record, a prominent military analyst, declares flatly that we see before us "the manifest disintegration of NATO as a viable security organization warranting the present commitment of U.S. ground forces to Europe's forward defense." At the other end of the spectrum Robert Komer, a former senior defense official, condemns the "sin" of unilateralism, and argues in effect that nothing has changed in the American relationship with the continent over the past thirty-five years. To compound the difficulty, the interlocutors in these debates often conflate different definitions of the problem, opposing geostrategic concepts to geopolitical ones or stating the alternatives—Europe vs. the Pacific, going it alone vs. having allies, keeping resolutely to the sea vs. preparing to engage the Red Army on the continent—too starkly for useful discussion.

The art of strategic analysis does not, or should

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not, rest on such simple dichotomies, and in the real world statesmen do not make such bald choices. Rather, the question is one of degree—what priorities we assign in peace and war to different theaters of operations, how we structure forces to achieve their missions, and so on. Even in the most "unilateralist" view the United States will need allies, if only to project its power overseas; and even the most ardent advocate of "coalition defense" must admit that the United States as a great power has interests distinct from those of its European allies. Europe is extremely important to us, but so too is the Pacific region, specifically Japan. Command of the sea is the sine qua non of successful American containment of the Soviet Union and its allies, but (as England discovered in each of its wars against Spain, France, and Germany) command of the sea can accomplish nothing without continental power.

What follows, then, is an attempt to clarify America's strategic interest in Europe. In concentrating on the strategic question I hardly mean to dismiss or ignore economic or, perhaps even more important, ideological interests. Ideological and cultural affinities in particular have made the alliance both workable and worthwhile in ways that would be quite inconceivable in a coalition based on strategic commonality alone. We should remember, however, that America's initial commitment to Europe during World War II and, afterward, during the early 1950's, was regularly justified in terms of a strategic interest quite distinct from other and less potent interests. Although Secretary of State Dean Acheson at first made his case for the dispatch of a half-dozen American divisions to Europe in 1951 on the basis of our common culture, he went on to say, "But our policy does not rest solely upon these intangibles, important as they are." Rather,

> Outside of our own country, free Europe has the greatest number of scientists, the greatest industrial production, and the largest pool of skilled manpower in the world. Its resources in coal, steel, and electric power are enormous. It has a tremendous shipbuilding capacity, essential to control of the seas. Through its overseas connections, it has access to a vast supply of raw materials which are absolutely vital to American industry.

In short, Acheson made a strategic argument, one that was echoed by General Dwight D. Eisenhower and others, and which also reflected the opinions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The question we need to answer is, to what degree is this analysis still valid today?

II

It was quite clear following World War II and the dissolution of the Allied coalition against Hitler that control of Western Europe would be, as the official historian of the JCS has written, "the foremost prize in the cold war." Europe was the epicenter of the world economy; indeed, it had given birth to that world economy. Although two world wars had devastated the continent, ruining industry and slaughtering millions, the fact remained that Europe still contained a skilled and energetic population and the basic material requirements for large-scale economic production. Moreover, Europe still controlled most of the non-European world, and the vital raw materials located there. British sway over the Persian Gulf safeguarded Middle Eastern oil; France and the Netherlands controlled territories possessing similarly valuable raw materials.

Europe was thus *the* strategic stake for the United States in the immediate postwar period. With it in our camp, we could count on ultimate economic superiority over the Soviet Union: without it, we would have faced as bleak a political-military situation as that of the summer of 1940. Eisenhower put it simply: "If we take that whole complex with its potential for military exploitation and transfer it from our side to another side, the military balance of power has shifted so drastically that our safety would be gravely imperiled."

The importance of Europe as the main stake in the U.S.-Soviet competition escaped very few American statesmen and soldiers—hence the relative ease with which they could take the unprecedented action of stationing several hundred thousand American troops there to protect it from subversion and aggression during its period of recovery. Other areas of the world, including the Far East, had second priority—indeed, in the case of Japan, a priority considerably lower than that.

Europe recovered in due course from World War II, and today continues to constitute a strategic stake of the first order for the United States. Considered together, the West European states make up one of the three most productive regions of the world, accounting for some 17.3 percent of world gross national product (as opposed to 24.9 percent for the United States, 8.7 percent for Japan, and 13.8 percent for the Soviet Union). Yet a number of striking changes have occurred since the 1950's which considerably diminish the *relative* importance of Europe as a strategic stake.

Perhaps the most significant of these is the rise of Japan, and of the countries of the Pacific basin more generally. The Japanese economy, once smaller than that of any of the major European states, now far outstrips them, individually if not yet collectively. It has known a period of extraordinary sustained growth which gives no indication of stopping. The figures are most telling in the automobile industry: in 1960 Japanese automobile production stood at 165,000 units as opposed to Europe's 4,920,000; by 1980 Japan's pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

duction had leaped to 6,758,000, while Europe's had barely doubled to 9,450,000. Even more important from the point of view of long-term military-industrial potential is what has happened in electronics. American and Japanese companies lead in the development of computers, fiberoptics, and all of the associated technologies which have already begun to exert as profound an influence over military technology and warfare as did the introduction of the steam engine in ships or the internal combustion engine on land. Europe, on the other hand, has fallen seriously behind in the electronic revolution.

The reasons for Europe's relative economic decline since the early 1970's are too numerous and complicated to be explored in detail here. They include an expanding welfare state, low labor mobility, and the failure of the European Economic Community to promote real free trade, as opposed to the subsidization of various special interests. Europe's decline means, however, that it does not carry the same strategic economic weight that it did in the 1950's and early 1960's. Indeed, the loss of *Japanese* technological and human resources to the Soviet Union would now threaten the United States as much as the loss of Western Europe.

This is not to suggest that Europe has become unimportant from the point of view of American strategy. Rather, other areas have increased their importance substantially: Northeast Asia (including Japan and China), the Persian Gulf, and Central America.

Japan's importance from the military-industrial point of view is obvious. In addition, Japan's recent increases in military expenditure and its alignment with China against the Soviet Union both work to the American advantage. China has also become a strategic stake for the United States because of its ability to tie down large proportions of Soviet forces, and to divert large amounts of military investment from other areas. Sino-Soviet antagonism, barely envisaged at the beginning of the cold war, has become a major source of strategic advantage to the United States, and it is in America's interest to see that hostility continue. Approximately one-quarter of the Red Army's divisions face the Chinese. Although many of these are only at half-strength, and although the Soviets station approximately twice as many divisions in Eastern Europe and the European military districts of the Soviet Union, the creation and sustenance of the Far Eastern forces places an immense logistical burden on the Soviets.

Persian Gulf oil also remains critical for the functioning of the world economy. Whereas in the early 1950's and through the 1970's other powers (Britain and then Iran) helped police the Gulf, today the United States bears the brunt of ensuring the continuation of the flow of oil from that region. Despite the stimulus to oil exploration elsewhere and to conservation caused by the OPEC price rises of the 1970's, Europe depends on Persian Gulf sources for about a third of its oil, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand for over half of theirs. The United States has slowly begun to take the measure of what this commitment requires in terms of force structure, logistics, and deployments. In many cases it means the reallocation of funds and forces away from European contingencies.

In Central America the boiling up of revolution—home-grown, perhaps, but also fostered by outside powers—has restored some of the importance of that area as a strategic stake. The possibility of a turbulent southern border, massive population flows into the United States, and/or the creation of hostile Soviet client states will inevitably increase strategic concern with America's own backyard—a preoccupation absent from American strategic thinking since the fourth decade of this century—and create another potential drain on American military resources.

These three regions have emerged in addition to Europe as strategic stakes in the U.S.-Soviet competition. In all cases, their preservation or exploitation will require additional military expenditures and deployments, although not necessarily on the scale of those devoted to Europe.

III

IN ADDITION to its role as a strategic stake for the United States, Europe must also be considered in its role as a strategic *asset*, in particular a military asset. The European states possess, collectively, one of the greatest masses of conventional power in the world. Whether we are considering equipment or manpower, the European NATO states and the friendly neutrals of Europe possess more ground forces—in terms of numbers of soldiers, tanks, and so forth—than the United States. Yet in this area, too, enormous changes have occurred since the formation of NATO.

Over the years the European powers had gradually assumed most of the manpower burden of NATO defense, and integrated more countries into that defense. This was particularly true during the Vietnam war, when the Europeans increased their defense budgets in small increments even while the United States was drawing down forces in Europe in order to fight in Southeast Asia. Recently, however, the aggregate trends have been reversed, in particular as the Carter and Reagan administrations have made additional commitments to European defense. Today, for example, some 25 percent of NATO's 20,000 tanks are American; ten years ago the ratio was approximately 20 percent. The recent steady increases in the American defense budget (including the portion devoted to NATO), the program to mod-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ernize American armed forces, and, on the other side, the budgetary and demographic pressures facing the European allies will cause the overall relative contribution of Europe to diminish. (This assumes no major increases in European defense spending, a premise which seems reasonable enough.)

Even more significant in terms of long-term trends are qualitative changes like the virtual disappearance of European states (with the exception of France) as transoceanic powers and the diminution or disappearance of colonial contributions to Western power. To be sure, American statesmen in the immediate postwar period regarded European control of colonies overseas as a diversion from continental defense; this was particularly true of the American approach to France in the 1950's. A more sober recalculation in the 1970's suggested that the United States should not have expected so much of a military return on European decolonization; in fact, decolonization imposed political-military costs as well as yielding benefits.

In the early part of the cold war it was expected that American allies would help bear the burdens of defense outside Europe. Indeed, in 1951 the Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, could point to the participation of French, British, Turkish, and Dutch soldiers in the Korean war as evidence of such contributions. But following Korea, the willingness of our European allies to fight outside Europe for common interests eroded quickly. Somewhat more slowly, but nonetheless inexorably, the ability of European states engaged in extra-European politics to project force also dwindled. Great Britain and France in particular, which had exercised substantial regional influence through the use of forces deployed in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, gradually withdrew those forces as they granted independence to their former colonial dominions.

The British and French governments made (and continue to make) some effort to retain strategically mobile light forces for deployment overseas, but such efforts are of necessity small. In the Falklands war of 1982 and the Zaire intervention of 1978, the respective British and French forces required American logistical support in order to conduct relatively small operations overseas. In each case the operation succeeded, but each case also demonstrated how far these two powers had sunk even from the efforts of which they had been capable in 1956 at Suez.

To be sure, the European powers retain some forces uniquely suited to operations in the Third World, and some will to use those forces. The shadowy British involvement in Oman is one example; France's deployments in West Africa and Djibouti are another. At the lowest levels of conflict the European powers can thus make significant contributions to American power. But once one considers larger requirements—the projection of substantial air and naval power, the dispatch of expeditionary forces, or the rapid arming or rearming of a Third World ally—European capabilities appear far more modest. Moreover—and this is crucial—European states are and will no doubt remain unlikely to participate in major military operations outside the NATO area.

As for the independent European nuclear forces of France and Great Britain, these do make an additional contribution to the overall strategic balance between West and East, although the measure is hard to quantify. These forces do not merely increase the "target sets" of Soviet nuclear forces; far more importantly, they complicate Soviet planning of an attack against the West by presenting multiple centers of decision, each of which could destroy a substantial proportion of Soviet society. The rising cost of effective nuclear delivery systems, however, and the prospect of increasingly effective anti-missile defenses, call their future utility into some doubt.

IV

WHATEVER our assessment of its role as a strategic stake and a strategic asset, Europe is also of interest to the United States simply by virtue of its location. European bases are important for the conduct of strategic nuclear war against the Soviet Union; Europe is a point of access to the restive satrapies of Eastern Europe, the most sensitive parts of the Soviet empire; Europe holds naval chokepoints for denying the Soviet fleet access to the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea; finally, Europe is a point of access to strategic positions in the Third World.

That Europe contains the most extensive array of American overseas bases has long been known. Often forgotten, however, is that throughout the 1950's and early 1960's the United States depended on European bases in order to be able to conduct *any* military operations—above all, nuclear operations—against the Soviet military-industrial heartland. During the 1950's the limited range of the B-47, the main weapon of the Strategic Air Command, required bases in European or European-controlled countries. As an interim measure until intercontinental ballistic missiles were developed, intermediate-range Thor and Jupiter missiles were deployed in Italy and Turkey, and U-2 reconnaissance planes were staged from European airfields. In the early days of submarine-based nuclear forces, American submarines also had to operate within short ranges of their targets—in other words, off European coastlines.

Thus, in the early stages of the cold war American intelligence-gathering and strategic forces depended heavily on the security of European bases. But this has changed. The development of a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genuine intercontinental bomber (the B-52), land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (the Titan, followed by Minuteman), and increasingly long-range sea-launched ballistic missiles (the C-4, with a range of three times that of the early Polaris missiles) has meant that American strategic forces can operate without using European bases.

Additionally, the tremendous growth in the use of satellites for various kinds of intelligence-gathering has reduced some of the utility of West European bases. Although the invention and deployment of the cruise missile may in part renew Europe's importance as strategic geography, since cruise-missile carriers will have to operate in close proximity to Europe in order to strike at Soviet targets, the fact remains that the central strategic forces of the United States no longer require European basing or find themselves greatly aided by it.

In quite a different way, however, Europe retains geostrategic significance as a point of access to the Soviet Union itself, and its empire. Traditionally, NATO planners have viewed this as more of a vulnerability than a potential asset, although some have suggested that more might be done to exploit the proximity of a restive population to the west of the Soviet Union; Samuel P. Huntington, for instance, has suggested that the United States could use the threat of a retaliatory offensive into Eastern Europe to deter Soviet attacks on NATO, a strategy which, if adopted, would require the continuation of a substantial land-based force in Central Europe.

One might argue that a free and independent Western Europe under the aegis of American military power exercises, by virtue of its very existence, a corrosive effect on the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe. Television and radio broadcasts, in addition to commercial and tourist travel across the Iron Curtain, serve to remind East Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, and Poles of the ties which once bound them to the countries of the West.

In two locations, the far north and along Turkey's northern border, NATO has land borders with the Soviet Union itself. The Soviets' preoccupation with territorial integrity leads them to place great emphasis on protecting their borders. As a result, these borders create both dangers and opportunities for the United States. Dangers, because of the possibility of an accidental clash of U.S. or allied and Soviet forces; opportunities, because they force the Soviet Union to divert military resources to defend its border regions.

A third source of geostrategic interest arises from consideration of maritime power. The steady growth of the Soviet navy and Soviet naval aviation since the mid-1960's has focused attention on the problem of securing NATO's sea lines of communication. In addition, the growing range of Soviet sea-launched ballistic missiles (from 1,400 km in the mid-1960's to 8,000 km or better today) enables the Soviets to create submarine "sanctuaries" off NATO's northern flank. In order to maintain an orderly flow of reinforcements and goods to Europe in the event of a war—in other words, in order to preserve Europe as a strategic stake—American and allied forces must attempt to hold back Soviet forces along the chokepoints of the northern flank, if not to push them back to their bases on the Kola peninsula. The obvious implication is that American anti-submarine forces will have to operate more in the northern area than had previously been planned. A similar chokepoint in the southern flank—the Dardanelles—is vital for control of the Mediterranean.

The final point of strategic geography has to do with access to the Third World. European bases are physically well structured to support operations in various parts of the Third World, but are not necessarily *politically* well-situated to do so. Here the lessons of the 1973 Middle East war are significant: American attempts to use European bases in contingencies other than an all-out war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact may meet opposition or even a veto by the host country. More importantly, Europe no longer controls bases *in* the Third World which would be useful in the event of conflict. In the 1950's, European-controlled outposts in North Africa (especially Morocco), the Middle East (Algeria and Egypt), and the Far East (Aden and Singapore) offered valuable supplements to the American basing network; today the United States finds itself painfully reestablishing a basing network by negotiating new, bilateral arrangements with Morocco, Kenya, Somalia, and Oman.

In addition, the rise of new areas of concern in the Third World changes the relative utility of certain European basing areas. In particular, eastern Turkey has become increasingly important for the projection of military power into the Persian Gulf. Newly constructed air bases in that region, although not specifically designated for the purpose, could help the United States Air Force slow a Soviet invasion of Iran. Equally importantly, bases in Turkey serve as a useful threat to the southern flank of the Soviet Union. Turkey's numerous, hardy, and disciplined armed forces lack modern military hardware. Insofar as the United States can remedy that need (which is huge), it will create an increasing southern-flank threat to the Soviet Union.

V

FINALLY, in calculating the American strategic interest in Europe it is necessary to determine not only the value of Europe as stake, asset, and geographical location, but also

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cost to America of maintaining its commitment to its European allies. That is to say, to what extent is Europe a strategic liability?

Europe has always had first claim on American military resources. But when in the 1970's and 1980's efforts were made to calculate the size of that commitment, the results astonished even its advocates. According to one General Accounting Office calculation, 56 percent of U.S. military spending went to cover European contingencies; total American expenditure on NATO amounted to slightly more than that of the other members of the alliance combined.

To be sure, all such attempts to calculate in purely monetary terms the price of America's commitment to Europe face serious accounting problems: how, for example, should one assess the cost of forces stationed in the United States and dedicated to NATO, yet capable of being given other missions?

Moreover, it must be recognized that even if American troops stationed in Europe were reduced in number, American force structures might remain as large as they are, or become even larger. A more fruitful line of inquiry would ask: (1) What are the trends in Europe's claim on American military resources? (2) What effects has the European commitment had on the size and composition of American forces? (3) What effects has the European commitment had on the intangible elements of force structure—doctrine, orientation, and habits of thought?

The first of these questions is easily answered. Europe absorbs a greater proportion of U.S. conventional forces in 1985 than it did in 1964, before the Vietnam war. Although absolute numbers of U.S. forces stationed in Europe have declined since the early 1960's, as a proportion of U.S. forces stationed abroad they have increased steadily. Over two-thirds of American soldiers, sailors, and airmen stationed overseas serve in Europe, and an increasing percentage of those serve in Germany. U.S. forces in the Pacific, by contrast, have declined both in real terms and proportionate to U.S. forces overseas and U.S. forces overall. The initial commitment to Europe of some 300,000 men came from an overall armed force of 3.25 million. A similar sized force today comes from an overall force almost a third smaller. Trends in deployment of key items of equipment point in the same direction.

Over time, the strategic commitment to Europe has more and more sharply affected American force structures at home as well. The "heavying" of Army divisions in response to increased preparation for European contingencies has been one aspect of this. Increasingly, U.S. reserve forces and even the Marine Corps (not traditionally a Europe-oriented force) have found themselves assigned to European missions, with corresponding effects on doctrine and organization.

THE most obvious manifestation of the increasing commitment of American military resources to Europe lies not in the numbers of troops stationed there in peacetime but in those committed to its defense by American war planners. Current plans for a crisis envision an extraordinary deployment of ten divisions in ten days to the European front lines, with four divisions drawing their equipment from POMCUS (Prepositioning of Materiel Configured to Unit Sets) stocks warehoused in Europe. The strategic awkwardness of this arrangement should be apparent: POMCUS is costly, and offers lucrative targets to Soviet air and special forces. More than one knowledgeable observer has asked whether the forces scheduled to pick up this equipment will find it intact, find it operable, or be able to organize themselves and deploy in an orderly fashion from assembly points under attack.

The overstretch of American forces caused by the advent of the All-Volunteer Force, the emergence of new military commitments (particularly in the Persian Gulf), and the decay of alliance structures has led American planners to assign extremely demanding missions to the reserves. To meet the increased mobilization commitment to Europe, the United States Army has created a force structure that depends on reserve forces in order to undertake any major military campaign.

The results are twofold. First, reserve units must now prepare for early commitment and hence maintain high readiness for all-out combat. Not only do the history and logic of the American reserve system make one doubt that reserve units can attain the requisite efficiency; what this also means is that the most capable reserve units cannot serve (as they have traditionally and most usefully served) as a framework for a vastly increased force structure in wartime. By assigning the most efficient and well-equipped reserve forces to early European deployment, the United States runs the risk of finding itself stripped of a central strategic reserve after mobilization, and without a cadre of experienced units and soldiers to train and stiffen new, draft-based armies. Second, a reserve-dependent force structure oriented toward Europe will prove awkward for use in lesser contingencies (in the Persian Gulf, for example); for domestic political reasons, any President would hesitate to call out reserve forces for such purposes.

The European orientation of U.S. forces, particularly the Army, detracts from our ability to cover other contingencies adequately. More precisely, the need to prepare for a massive and early commitment to a land war in Europe distorts planning for both hot and cold war with the Soviet Union and other powers in other regions. With the exception of the Pacific Command, other regional commands—Central Command, for example, responsible for the Middle East and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Persian Gulf in particular—have no forces under their peacetime control, because such forces have dual (European and non-European) missions. Even the Army's new light divisions must prepare for a European role in addition to Third World contingencies. The emphasis on Europe extends to training and equipment as well: the military deemphasizes skills such as counterinsurgency that do not apply to the European scenario.

Europe acts as a strategic liability in other ways, too, primarily by exercising a restraining effect on American actions. This has been most noticeable in the Middle East, where American and European policies have been at odds, but it holds true in other areas as well (the Strategic Defense Initiative, for example). If, on balance, U.S. and European interests overseas conflict less than they have done in the past, that is simply because European interests overseas have contracted so sharply. Where interests do clash is with regard to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Europeans, far more dependent on trade generally than the United States, and hard pressed to compete in world markets with the United States and Japan, find the Eastern-bloc markets increasingly attractive. At the same time the United States, fearful of Soviet attempts to steal or purchase Western technology, has attempted to impose restrictions on the kinds of trade its partners conduct with the Soviet empire.

In a larger sense, the Europeans have yet to experience the same disillusionment with détente that Americans have. Despite the invasion of Afghanistan and the imposition of martial law in Poland, the European states remain reluctant to resume the kind of conflict which divided the continent during the 1950's. One reason is that Western Europe benefits from closer economic ties to Eastern Europe. At a psychological level Europeans have also enjoyed the generally more relaxed political atmosphere that has pervaded the continent in the wake of détente and have hoped to insulate themselves from the atmosphere of East-West hostility which set in again in the late 1970's.

To sum up: over the past thirty years, America's commitment to Europe has absorbed an increasing proportion of U.S. military power, broadly defined. That commitment is most noticeable in the central region of Europe, although its effects have been felt to a lesser degree along the flanks as well. More importantly, the commitment has exercised an ever-growing influence on doctrine and organization. Demographic and fiscal trends—declining pools of draftable young men and stagnant European defense budgets—promise to augment the American role still further. This will hold true all the more if, as appears likely, the United States continues to dominate the next generation of military technology. Finally, all this has been happening while U.S.-European interests have increasingly diverged, or at any rate while the focus of divergence has moved from the periphery—the former colonial world—to the center, the very heart of East-West relations.

VI

WHAT do we learn from this analysis? Broadly speaking, three changes have occurred over the history of the Atlantic alliance.

The first is Europe's relative decline as a strategic stake and asset in the competition with the Soviet Union, although the decline has by no means been precipitate or steep: the preservation of a free and allied Western Europe remains overwhelmingly important to the United States, and its forces remain a major asset in the overall balance between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The second is that Europe has become more of a strategic liability to the United States, less for reasons intrinsic to Europe than because of transformations elsewhere, including the rise of new areas of strategic concern (particularly the Persian Gulf and Central America) and the expansion of Soviet power.

Third, from the point of view of strategic geography it is the flanks of NATO that are becoming increasingly important, primarily because of the rise of Soviet maritime power, because of changes in military technology, and because of threats in the Persian Gulf.

These changes are all long-term and slow in nature; they constitute a kind of tectonic movement beneath the surface of policy debates. It is striking, however, how little systematic attention has been paid to them. Current force postures and commitments still represent a cumulative set of marginal additions to a strategic policy established some thirty-five years ago. It is natural that policy be made that way (in the United States, at any rate), but the process is not without its perils.

Can we do anything about these structural changes in our strategic interests without causing catastrophic political damage to the alliance? That is not an easy question to answer. What we can do, at least, is to make an effort to *understand* those changes, and their implications, in order to prepare ourselves to take remedial action in the event of some major break in the continuity of alliance politics or international relations more generally—say, the defection of Greece from the alliance, or Soviet intervention in Iran.

One such implication is the need to emphasize the flanks of NATO more than the central front. The latter was a major source of worry in 1951 when American troops were seen as necessary to stop (or at least slow) a Soviet army poised to overrun a disarmed Germany and a war-enfeebled Western Europe. The great shifts since then—the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rearmament of Germany, and the opportunity for a defense conducted with European reserve forces behind prepared fortifications and barriers—militate against pouring more resources into what is, after all, the region least likely to see a war. Instead, marginal resources could be devoted to Norway and above all to Turkey, the only country in NATO with no manpower shortage and with a long record of adherence to the alliance even in the face of poor treatment by it. It is, after all, on the periphery that the great wars of the past have broken out, and it is on NATO's flanks that one can most easily imagine military confrontations between the two sides.

A second implication is the need to reduce the dependence of Europe on immediate reinforcement by U.S. land-based forces. Military logic suggests the peculiarity (at the very least) of a strategy which relies heavily on the appearance within a week of massive armies from a power thousands of miles distant from the main battle front. Such a dependence is as politically unhealthy as it is militarily tenuous. The primary responsibility for Europe's defense on the ground must rest with Europeans.

Third is the need to encourage, as far as possible, the development of European defense entities. This may take a variety of forms: encouraging the revival of the West European Union; aiding, if need be directly, the creation of all-European (as opposed to national) arms industries; and minimizing the pressure the United States puts on Europeans to act where they will be least united, i.e., overseas. The stronger the European common defense—including ultimately a broader nuclear force than those of Britain and France—the less difficult it will be for the United States to adjust the balance between its forces and strategy on the one hand and its political commitments on the other.

ABOVE all, the United States must face the realities of its own strategic position, which has changed in major ways since the 1950's. The durability of the Atlantic alliance is both a source of strength and a temptation to the belief that the strategic equilibrium has remained unaltered. That belief is mistaken. We can, however, recognize that new strategic realities exist without concluding that we must discard old instruments of security. Indeed, only through such a recognition will we avoid the further enfeeblement of a coalition as venerable, and valuable, as the Atlantic alliance.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New York Down, Washington Up

Tod Lindberg

Such, such is the power of New York in the imagination that many people—I count myself among them—declare upon arriving that they will never leave. It is the city that all Americans know. Its sights and skyline are vivid from countless pictures, movies, and television programs, its pace and rhythm familiar from the same movies and TV shows and from novels and plays cheap and serious, its importance affirmed nightly to a generation with the sound of a familiar baritone: "Direct from our newsroom in New York, the CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite."

By New York, of course, one does not mean metropolitan New York, or even all of New York City. The Bronx, Queens, Staten Island, virtually all of Brooklyn—these, the lands of accents from which stand-up comics have traditionally drawn laughs, are different places altogether, as are such parts of the island of Manhattan itself as Harlem, Washington Heights, and the Lower East Side.

Even Wall Street and the financial district, New York's downtown at the southern end of Manhattan, do not qualify except during business hours (which means they do not qualify). To walk on Wall Street in the evening or on weekends is to find oneself a character in a creepy post-apocalypse science-fiction movie. Was it deadly nerve gas that killed all the people but left the buildings intact? The fallout from neutron bombs? Plague? And, in any case, how is this different from Philadelphia? It is a measure of New York's greatness, and not simply the result of a freak of geography, that when residents of other cities speak of "downtown" they are talking about the center of things, such as it is, whereas New Yorkers by the same term mean some place extraneous.

But apart from these obvious considerations, it would be a grievous error to try to demarcate precise geographical boundaries for the real New York. In the first place, it is obvious that the boundaries change constantly. They have been pushing out for the past ten years, in the process known as gentrification, and previously they had contracted. In the second place, there are pockets within that do not qualify—the Milford Plaza Hotel, for example, and Mama Leone's restaurant, and the Broadway Theater, at 53rd Street, during the "farewell engagement" of Yul Brynner in *The King and I*. I do not mean that the real New York is hostile to tourists—far from it—but some establishments do go too far in welcoming them. And in the third place, there are a number of noncontiguous outposts: at Avenue A and 7th Street is the Pyramid Club, which is part of New York; but to get there, one must take a cab through a part of the Lower East Side that is not New York. Similarly, Brooklyn Heights, which is just across the East River from Manhattan and affords some magnificent skyline views, is part of New York. And in a sense so are the Hamptons, the string of beachfront towns near the end of Long Island where New Yorkers own or rent summer homes.

But speaking in terms of geographical boundaries is finally and chiefly an offense because it does violence to the essence of the phenomenon, which is a matter of *Geist*, of spirit. There are many ways of characterizing that *Geist*, all of which may contribute to one's sense of it, but none of which, individually, is quite adequate. For example, the newspaper with the largest metropolitan-area circulation in New York—in fact, with the largest circulation of any city paper—is the New York *Daily News*, at something over a million-and-a-quarter daily. The second largest is the New York *Post*, at around 900,000. Far lower, at a bit more than three-quarters-of-a-million, is the New York *Times*. Yet it is fair to say that people who live in the real New York read only the *Times*. They may, occasionally, buy and read the *Post*, but very few of them have a good word to say for its marvelous sensationalism and screaming headlines. And not only do they not read the *Daily News*, they do not even know anyone who reads the *Daily News*.

I myself started reading the *Times* regularly at college, in Chicago, once the paper started publishing its cheap and readily available national edition. At the time, I thought something about it was distinctly maddening—namely the paper's sense, taken utterly for granted, that the city it serves is not merely the hub around which all things turn but the hub around which it is irrele-

Tod Lindberg was formerly managing editor of the *Public Interest* in New York City. He is currently executive editor of the *National Interest*, a new quarterly journal of foreign policy located in Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vant, wholly irrelevant, whether anything is turning. This is the *Times*'s informing certitude, and a Galileo could not shake it. But in Chicago it seemed a lie (even as I was aware of Chicago's famous "second-city" insecurities). Was there not, I petulantly insisted, a great deal of America to be found outside of New York City?

I did not then understand that the *Times* does not serve New York City, but rather the real New York. This is something that few real New Yorkers understand, and still less is it understood by people at the *Times*. For example, from a November 1984 article on catering one's parties: "Few are the New Yorkers, these days, who have the time or staff to entertain without some outside help." Truly that sentence is ripe for textual exegesis—I think its correct interpretation ultimately hinges on what the *Times* means by the verb "to entertain." But if the *Times*, here, has gone too far, its excess is instructive, serving to reveal the paper's unconscious sense of what life in the real New York is like.

As for me, my petulant insistence that the rest of the world was not superfluous evaporated when I made good on my intention to move to New York. Inside the hub, the balance is restored, and Galileo recants again, only this time sincerely. The peripheries and the details may change; nevertheless the center does not move.

To say all this, however, is to accomplish no more than one does by playing Frank Sinatra's rendition of "New York, New York" on the jukebox (something that can be done on what is surely a staggering percentage of American jukeboxes). This is legend—or, to be precise, half a legend.

The other half is New York as the city of menace, malice, and danger. Here—in the dark recesses of buildings, in near-empty subway cars, on the deserted sidestreets of "the city that never sleeps"—here shimmers the ghost of Kitty Genovese, perpetually crying for help on the verge of death by stabbing. New York hears, and does nothing. The critic Robert Warshow, discussing the stylized city of the old gangster movies, once wrote that "The final meaning of the city is anonymity and death." The cab drivers who fleece you, the pickpockets and purse-snatchers, the punks who rip the gold chain from around your neck, the denizens of 42nd Street and Central Park in the dark, the passers-by who avert their eyes, or perhaps gawk—these too are New York.

The case of Bernhard Goetz, the "subway vigilante," is emblematic. Four punks with sharpened screwdrivers, "Give me five dollars" (*five dollars*!), a strange man with an unhappy past, and four or more gunshots—the rest of the country can say, with some justification, "Only in New York." New Yorkers themselves, of course, can go the country one better, getting it right: "Only on the subway." The New York subway system, as they well know, is the true locus of evil in the world.

Questions of criminal justice and evil notwithstanding, though, the essential fact is that in the end, the city will take its vengeance on Bernhard Goetz as well. Within a few months of the events that made him famous, we were already asking what had become of him. Here, the forces of anonymity are the only possible victor.

What other American city can compete with such a myth, or pair of myths? Certainly not Chicago, despite its ceaseless bleating about how it has the tallest building and the most distinctive architecture, about how the really innovative theater takes place there, about the superiority of the Chicago Symphony, about the epic greatness of Saul Bellow. The truth or falsity of its claims is beside the point. The fact is that Chicago is trying to fight New York on New York's own turf, the nation's cultural life. What Chicago does not understand is that by letting New York make the rules for the competition, Chicago must lose.

As for Los Angeles, the essential problem—apart from the "There's no *there* there" issue—is Hollywood. Understanding Hollywood is crucial to understanding American popular culture, and thus America, but Hollywood's importance is much too generalized to be uniquely the property of Los Angeles. What is left is the freeway system. Driving on it, Joan Didion writes, is "the only secular communion Los Angeles has." Yes, writes David Brodsly in *LA Freeway: An Appreciative Essay*: "Every time we merge with traffic we join our community in a wordless creed: the belief in individual freedom, in a technological liberation from place and circumstance, in a democracy of personal mobility. . . . The LA freeway is the cathedral of its time and place." Yes, yes, writes Christopher Knight, reviewing the preceding in the *Public Interest*: "The secular theology of this New Eden is enacted in the creed spoken in the automotive basilica." But wait, says Bret Easton Ellis in his novel *Less Than Zero*, "People are afraid to merge on freeways in Los Angeles." So it is that of Los Angeles the less said the better and the more said the sillier.

San Francisco for a time enjoyed a vogue as the center of the hip and the trendy. In many ways, it still deserves its reputation: it has, after all, recently enacted the most progressive, i.e., the most restrictive, anti-smoking laws in the country. But there is a lesson here. The individual's radical right to the pursuit of a "lifestyle"—free from the smoke of others, should he so choose—must inevitably mean the curtailment of certain other "lifestyles," such as those of smokers. San Francisco is now in the business of picking and choosing among the once-private styles of its citizens, among things that used to be settled by individual courtesy and civility. This statist muddle is certainly a betrayal of the San Francisco dream,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

namely unlimited freedom for everyone. Whether or not there will be significantly fewer deaths resulting from secondhand smoke in the years to come, the feeling is bound to spread that San Francisco's status as the avant-garde of hip freedom passed with the end of the 70's. Marin County, where anything used to go, was well-satirized even as early as 1977, with the publication of Cyra McFadden's *The Serial*.

"What about Houston? What about De-troit? What about Pittsburgh PA?" Thus David Byrne and Talking Heads in a song called "Life During Wartime." No, the answer is that of all American cities, only one, Washington, seems to be in a position to join the battle with New York. This is a new development; New York used to have no competition whatsoever. And its implications may have a profound effect on the intellectual and political map of the United States.

In most countries of the world, whatever is not the capital constitutes the provinces. Apart from using the latter as vacation spots —dachas on the Caspian Sea, the waters at Bath, the spas at Baden-Baden, Castel Gandolfo—the Upper Ten Thousand (in the splendid 19th-century phrase of Nathaniel Willis) are to be found in and around the capital.

In the United States, this has not been true for a long, long time—since Philadelphia was the capital, if then. The cultural center has always been elsewhere—first Boston, then New York, now New York in conjunction with Hollywood—and day-to-day political affairs have been at least distinct and, to the serious-minded, actually subordinate. This is now changing.

There is no denying the increase in the importance of the federal government in American life in the last fifty years, and particularly in the last twenty. But it would be wrong to think that Washington is trying to draw a distinction between capital and provinces on grounds of its political power—in short, by force, as the coarser political philosophers among us might say. It is not a matter of "We have power, and you do not," which is both obvious and, in a democratic context, false. Rather, it is a matter of "We *know* power, and you do not." Given the myth of New York, Washington, in its own eyes and more and more in the eyes of others, has created a counter-myth—namely, that people who live anywhere else do not know *anything* about politics.

Outside the Beltway—the circle of highways in Virginia and Maryland that delineates the border of the real Washington—lives the mass of men who do not understand, have no hope of understanding, the true role of Donald Regan, the prospects of military or tax reform, the political position and future of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick. Here, we are a long way from high-school civics texts on how a bill becomes law, on how regulations are promulgated, on the structure of the State Department and the conduct and making of foreign policy. Even the more celebrated thinkers on the problems of bureaucracy and policy-making, from Max Weber to Graham Allison and James Q. Wilson, are here considered too general and abstract, and above all too outside, to be of any use in understanding what is really happening.

The utility of this inside knowledge is undeniable. If one wants to try to manipulate the levers of power, one is well-advised to know what the levers connect to; and, as many people from outside the Beltway have learned upon making the attempt—from those in Jimmy Carter's White House to James Watt—the lack of inside knowledge can have catastrophic results. Moreover, in Washington the general presumption is that everyone—each person and also each institution—is an interested party, that everyone's hands are on the levers in some fashion, or at least would like to be. This is obvious in the case of politicians and lobbyists, but extends far beyond them.

For example, the Heritage Foundation—which has come to be regarded as the most important think-tank in Washington—is tax-exempt, and as such is prohibited by law from advocating or opposing the passage of particular pieces of legislation. Its role must be exclusively educational. In practice, the distinction is a fine one, and it is fair to say that the Heritage Foundation has not made its reputation solely on the basis of its pedagogy. Its fame results, instead, from the fact that Heritage has had the ear and attention of powerful people in the Reagan administration and on Capitol Hill. Washington, whatever it thinks of the conservative politics of the Heritage Foundation, respects its access, its influence—in short, its power—and is in some respects all but incapable of conceiving of it as an "educational" organization.

The Heritage Foundation (and I am using the particular to stand for the general here), to be sure, does see itself in that latter, educational light, however much it may also be concerned to preserve its access and exert its power. Similarly, the Washington *Post* truly is devoted to the public's right to know and to accurate and fair reporting, in which each of the day's news stories is given the degree of attention and prominence it deserves. But the *Post*, too, is an interested party. At the crudest level, the *Post* has an obvious need to protect its own access, and to publish what it pleases. So we are offered stories resulting from leaks of classified information, but no stories at all about government officials who violate the law and potentially damage national security by revealing secrets. "Protecting one's sources" is, in this instance, another way of saying that news about high public officials will remain unpublished.

Interestedness *per se* is by no means an indictable offense in Washington. To demonstrate that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

someone has goals or motives about which he is less than forthcoming is not, inside the Beltway, to discredit or delegitimate him, but to state the obvious. One must not forget that this city has its origins in the view that government can "supply, by opposite and rival interest, the defect of better motives," as *The Federalist* has it. But because of the *Post*'s interestedness—and because of the general assumption of interestedness that is a part of the myth of Washington—there is no house organ for those who live inside the Beltway.

The New York *Times* is a unifying force for the real New York in a way that the Washington *Post* is not for Washington and could not be, even were it absolutely fair, accurate, and accurately proportioned. To see why this should be so, and to help fix the venerable tradition behind the myth that Washington has been creating, we may look to Machiavelli's *The Prince*. In the dedicatory letter to Lorenzo de' Medici, in which Machiavelli establishes himself as perhaps the quintessentially interested man (*The Prince* being among other things an application for employment), the philosopher writes that into his "little book" he had condensed his "knowledge of the accomplishments of great men," which he had come to as a result of his "long experience of modern affairs and continuous study of ancient." Now, where—to introduce an anachronism—did Machiavelli get the *news*? Certainly not from anything like the New York *Times* or the CBS Evening News. No, one must imagine Machiavelli in whispered consultation with the leading men of Florence and the emissaries of foreign principalities. Nearly five hundred years later, according to the myth of Washington, nothing has changed.

And it is here that Washington's myth takes on a further richness. As with New York's, there is a darker side. For Washington is also a city of scandal. Listening closely in the course of one's whispered consultations one hears stories of peccadillos, and crimes both petty and high—sexual and otherwise—among the nation's great public men and women, in and out of government. And one hears and participates in no end of speculation as to the effects such transgressions have on the conduct of national policy—who is protecting or threatening whom, and why. Again, this is nothing one will read about in the newspapers.

It is not simply fear of libel laws; that would make it solely a pragmatic consideration, much as the desire for political power, successfully pursued inside the Beltway, entails of necessity an insider's knowledge of politics. No, the pragmatics of life inside the Beltway must not be allowed to obscure the sheer *joy* of life there, the pleasure one takes in knowing something for its own sake. This knowledge need not be put to use, or disseminated as widely as possible; possession of it can be enough. To hear something off the record, or in the strictest confidence, is to enter the company of the relatively few. Who would deny the pleasure in that? Washington is full of "the hum and buzz of implication," in Lionel Trilling's phrase for the manners of a culture. Whatever one's reasons, pragmatic or playful, the only way to get anything approaching a complete accounting of what is happening inside the Beltway is to tap into that hum and buzz.

THE myth of Washington is thus quite a bit more subtle than the typical myth of capital cities. And though it has not generally been promulgated with a view toward attacking or vying with New York specifically—all legends must begin internally and then spread outward if they are to be effective, as the failure of Chicago in this respect suggests—it is clear that New York is *de facto* the most challenged party. This would be true if only because New York has been top of the list, king of the heap, for quite some time. But it is doubly true because New York has prided itself especially on its encompassing insight: nothing human is alien to it. Now to be dismissed on grounds of hopeless ignorance, to be deemed an irrelevance spinning or not spinning around the true hub—this is the unkindest cut of all.

It cuts with special poignance for intellectuals and would-be intellectuals, and for all those, like me, with interests broadly cultural and broadly political. I once swore fealty to New York as a vassal to his lord—a quite ordinary thing, or so it once seemed, for someone with interests and ambitions like mine. Yet now I live and work in Washington, and the truth is that I know more people here who are like me than I ever did in New York; what is more, by now many of those I did know in New York have themselves taken up residence inside the Beltway. In this sense, I am part of a general migration.

James Atlas has recently assessed "The Changing World of New York Intellectuals" in the New York *Times Magazine* (August 25, 1985). He notes —it is a familiar observation—that the New York scene is no longer what it was, in the heyday of Philip Rahv's and William Phillips's *Partisan Review*. He mentions a conference held in April 1985, at which one of the panel subjects was "What Was a New York Intellectual?": "Despite their strenuous efforts to dissociate themselves from the funereal grammar of their topic, none of the panelists really disputed its main implication: that such a community no longer exists. The past tense says it all."

"So where do you go if your idea of the good life is to read and write books?" he asks. "The university." This too is familiar. The rise of the universities fragmented the New York community; and at these universities, the life of the mind itself became fragmented, specialized, arcane: "The general, free-wheeling essay that was a favored genre of the New York intellectuals . . . is nearly extinct."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Atlas identifies "the intellectual vocation" as primarily a literary one, or at least one concerned chiefly with cultural matters, and especially the defense of high culture against low. The political views of the New York intellectuals Atlas sees as having been subsidiary to, or in the service of, their cultural concerns: "The important thing was to criticize society—from whatever vantage offered the best defense of culture against the Philistines."

I think that Atlas is mistaken to regard the politics as wholly subsidiary, and that this is the reason he is not very illuminating on the current situation. On the large political and moral questions, the ones that have always been of little interest in Washington, the New York intellectuals stood united. The United States was not a just society; democracy as practiced here and capitalism in theory anywhere were essentially illegitimate. Disinterested intellectual inquiry *had* to begin, in the view of the day, from at least an "alienated" position with respect to one's country, and more likely an adversarial one.

And so it is, I think, that the age of the New York intellectual, traditionally understood, came to a close on February 13, 1983—when Norman Podhoretz, speaking at a Committee for the Free World conference on "Our Country and Our Culture," said:

> The frank and candid and forthright acceptance of what I would call the duties or responsibilities of partisanship in certain circumstances is the only way to establish a case. . . . It is important to add that this exercise of the responsibilities of partisanship [need] not come at the expense of . . . the concern for fact, the disinterested attitude toward realities, scholarly solidity. One can be a partisan, one can take a strongly, unambiguously committed point of view, while being intellectually rigorous, while pursuing the literary virtues of lucidity and coherence.

Here was a statement of the centrality of politics to intellectual life, and it was joined by Podhoretz to a call to the defense of one's country—this was the "partisanship" to which he referred—not just because literature is threatened, but because everything is threatened.

When politics is accorded a position of primacy in the life of the mind, and partisanship no longer conflicts with a commitment to traditional intellectual virtues, then Washington—the city of politics, and of partisanship—is set to become a center of gravity on intellectual matters.

Washington is also the city that represents the legitimacy of American society. The Washington intellectuals, from Center-Left to Center-Right, have no difficulty accepting this legitimacy. The radical Left and the radical Right, who do not accept it, find themselves in a very difficult position inside the Beltway; they are alienated in a city that despises alienation most of all.

If Washington has thus mounted a *de-facto* challenge to New York's long-standing position of preeminence—and a challenge that must be taken seriously—the question is how successful Washington will ultimately be. Can New York mount an effective counterattack? Must it? Or is the New York *Geist* sufficiently well-established to ensure that it will prevail in the end?

From New York's point of view, the rise of the Washington intellectual ought to have been a truly alarming sign. Still, the Center-Right politics of so many Washington intellectuals suggests that their venue may simply be a function of a conservative administration. A test suggests itself: will the intellectual Right move back to New York should the liberals return to power in Washington?

To ask *that* question is to raise a host of issues with implications not only for conservative intellectuals but for everyone else as well. For the fact is that one cannot have an urban myth without an infrastructure on which to base it. The first requirement is a livable city.

Washington certainly meets this requirement; it is physically attractive and well-maintained, and economically affordable. And certainly New York once did. But there is a large and growing body of evidence to suggest that it does so no longer, or does so less and less each day. The issue, then, is not whether people will move back there but whether they can—or whether anyone can move there in the first place.

Those of us who have recently lived in New York often have a keen sense of this problem, and its contours are generally familiar from a constant stream of anecdote on the subject, as well as from more scholarly explorations. Education has gone wrong: tremendous infusions of public money have still not produced schools that do an adequate job of teaching children. Mass transportation has gone wrong: the subway lines are in an acute state of disrepair—in addition to their filth, noise, heat, and danger—and the money to bring them up to a level of minimal adequacy shows few signs of becoming available. Welfare has gone wrong: the doctrine of individual responsibility has been lost. Public order has gone wrong: increased restrictions on the ability of police to deal with minor but ultimately important violations—loitering, panhandling, vagrancy, drunkenness—have created the sense that anything goes, and an overburdened court system and overcrowded jails make it difficult to handle the more serious offenders. Public morality has gone wrong: prostitution and pornography, heterosexual and homosexual, abound. Housing has gone horribly, horribly wrong: uncontrolled rental units are astronomically expensive in Manhattan, units whose rents *are* controlled turn over only rarely and are often inadequately maintained, and condominium and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cooperative apartment prices continue their upward spiral. And on and on.

These are, of course, difficulties for all parts of all five boroughs, not just the "real" New York. And most of them—housing is an exception—are in some degree typical of large cities nowadays. But they have particularly crucial implications for the myth of New York, and for those people who do not, or who would have it that they do not, know anyone who reads the *Daily News*.

New York has always been difficult. The literature is full of instances in which three girls, just graduated from Vassar, move to New York to take low-paying jobs in publishing houses, and share a two-room apartment to make ends meet. But life, according to the literature, would be kind to them if they were talented and good; they had all wished themselves "a Scarsdale Galahad, a breakfast-eating Brooks Brothers type"—in Frank Loesser's lyric from *Guys and Dolls*—and that is what they would get, or perhaps someone more glamorous, or in any case an editorship at the publishing house.

Now, though, those three girls from Vassar may find that two-room apartment to be impossibly expensive, as well as uncongenial for other reasons, neighborhood safety being chief among them. They could, of course, live in Astoria, Queens, or Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, but as they well know, they did not decide to move to New York for *that*.

If they are serious about New York—if this is not just a phase, as it often is—they are not imagining Scarsdale Galahads, either. They want to stay in the city when they get married. They also want, in all likelihood, to continue pursuing their careers after marriage, and that is a good thing; the young couple is going to need two incomes to support the new apartment, and even then they will likely find themselves in hock.

In any event, it is not going to be a particularly large apartment, and though this will not seem like a great problem at first, eventually it will, when the time comes for a child or two. They will need more space, and there is a very good chance that they will not be able to afford it in the city. Even if they can, those children will sooner or later be ready for school—probably sooner, counting the day care they will require so that their mother can keep her job; this almost certainly means private school, and the expense which that entails.

At a less grand but still indicative level, how do they get around town, this couple? Do they take the subway to work? Probably they try to take the bus; but when pressed for time, they are more likely to hail a cab—if they can get a cab—than to head underground. When they go out in the evening, they will certainly take a cab home. This, too, is expensive.

One could go on, but enough is enough. The popular idea that the middle class has disappeared from New York is not quite right. It is still to be found in the outer boroughs of the city, and even, residually, in the real New York. But by and large in the real New York are people who, by any reckoning of income distribution, have to be considered rich. The problem is that they do not feel even remotely rich, or for that matter well-off. They feel middle-class, and not even comfortably so, because of the expenses they incur.

There are those who, surveying the circumstances in which New Yorkers now find themselves, want you to feel sorry for these people. Until recently, this has been a major sub-specialty of the best of all the city magazines, *New York*—in whose brilliantly edited pages one could find articulated the essential sociology of the baby-boom urban professional long before anyone had started using the term "yuppie." Occasional articles in *New York* have more than reflected that generation's regrettable tendency toward self-pity and, not far beneath, its tendency toward self-congratulation. We are to take heart from the fact that in spite of the nearly insurmountable obstacles, New Yorkers nonetheless pluckily manage to make friends and raise children; if their apartments are small, still they eat from fancy china and use cloth napkins every day. One still wants to "have it all," and praises oneself for getting all one can.

But a seismic shift in *New York*'s position came last July with the publication of "Second Thoughts on Having It All," by Tony Schwartz (July 15, 1985). It is a significant departure, much more tough on its subjects: "Accustomed for years to have what they want—and addicted to what they have—the prospect of sacrifice is nothing short of terrifying." The article, which is mainly about people who are now finding a better mix of what they want in the suburbs than in the city, concludes: "Making that accommodation, however, would force a generation of baby-boomers to accept a prosaic fact of life they have skillfully managed to resist for nearly twenty years. It can be summed up in two words: growing up."

Now certainly I do not expect anyone to take pity on these nervously "middle-class" rich people. Nobody told them, after all, to live in New York; that was their decision, or at least their wish. Reality contravenes desire as it will, and accepting this, as Tony Schwartz has it, is the essence of growing up. Our hypothetical couple has no right, by law or nature, to live on or around the most expensive real estate in the world, no legitimate claim to be able to afford its attendant incidental expenses even on generous salaries.

It is only that New York—the real New York, the New York of *Geist* and of song—depends exactly on such people as these. To be sure, it also

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

depends on the middle-aged lawyers, executives, and bankers who are really rich, and can comfortably afford the costs it now imposes. But even the lawyers, executives, and bankers would agree that if the city were theirs and theirs alone, it would be a different and poorer place, one generally not worth hearing songs sung about on jukeboxes throughout America. New York used to be able to accommodate the others—the girls from Vassar, the newlywed couple, the family of four (or five or six)—people in lesser circumstances owing to youth, to the birth of children, or to the fact that they worked in less remunerative fields of endeavor. It even accommodated the less-than-exceptional, the ranks of the would-be—writers, poets, playwrights, artists, musicians, dancers, actors, and more. The difficulties were real but manageable. That is less and less the case, and even *New York* magazine—in the form of an article called "Exodus," by Patricia Morrisroe (November 25, 1985)—has given its sanction to the youngish "creative" talent that has moved away. Here, of all places, we now find a serious hearing for the "growing number of people [who] have come to the same conclusion—that living in Manhattan is impossible or, at best, improbable."

THAT is why I think that the people who have moved to Washington are likely to stay there, that for the foreseeable future the myth of New York will continue to decline, both in absolute terms and especially relative to the myth of Washington. What the final outcome will be, it is impossible to say. Perhaps the United States will become a nation of two centers, like Moscow and St. Petersburg before the Revolution, or Rome and Milan today. Or perhaps there will be a single center that exists in two different cities, thanks to the Eastern Air Shuttle, least-cost-routed computerized long-distance systems, and Zapmail. That would be but a slight extrapolation from the current situation.

Or perhaps New York will rally. It is hard to imagine this happening, though, without some sort of initiating cataclysm—the sudden end of the rent controls that have wrecked the housing market, for example, or a fiscal crisis along the lines of the one in 1975, followed by a crash in real estate. This might amount to an exercise in destroying the village in order to save it, and insofar as there are millions, including at least a million-and-a-quarter readers of the *Daily News*, who have no real stake in the myth of New York but everything to lose in a cataclysm affecting the city that is simply their home, it is a course of action to be avoided at all costs.

OR PERHAPS New York's ability to support its myth will continue to decline until there is simply nothing left. This, for me, is a sad thought—although it fills many of my Washington friends, especially some of those who have recently arrived from New York, with glee. I, for one, harbor a vague intention of moving back at some point. And certainly I find no happiness in the notion that the day may come when New York is just an ordinary city, no different in one's imaginings from Houston, De-troit, or Pittsburgh PA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Misdiagnosis of American Medicine

Florence A. Ruderman

DURING most of human history, medicine has seemed a very minor factor in social life. For millennia, great minds analyzed and speculated on the interrelations of society and government, law, religion, and other institutions; no comparable thought was devoted to the interrelations of society and medicine.

This was still true when sociology came into being as a modern discipline. In their voluminous and now-classic works examining many of society's basic structures and processes, the founders of sociology scarcely so much as mentioned medicine. This omission becomes all the more striking when we recall that they gave major attention to other professions, and to the role of experts generally—and still more so when we recall how central to their work was the recognition of science and technology as driving forces in the modern world.

Within the last fifty years the situation has changed drastically. In all Western societies, medicine itself has emerged as a force to be reckoned with, encompassing a powerful profession and a great network of facilities and organizations, and it constitutes as well a social "problem." Moreover, where only yesterday medicine was ignored by social scientists, today it is the primary concern of a large and very active branch of the sociological profession.

But "medical sociology" reflects its relative youth, and particularly its lack of an intellectual pre-history. A recent, highly acclaimed book illustrates these problems. This book, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, by Paul Starr, a young sociologist at Harvard, has had a striking success.* It has been hailed in the general press, by sociologists, and by medical professionals as "monumental," "comprehensive," "brilliant," "lucid." Arnold Relman, the editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in an enthusiastic review, urged all physicians to read the book. (Dr. Relman later tempered his enthusiasm, but his admiration for Starr's "command of social forces" remains.) The book won a C. Wright Mills Award, a Bancroft Prize, and, as a crowning success, a Pulitzer Prize.

Nevertheless, Starr himself has had some rough going, having been denied tenure at Harvard. In view of the success of his book, the denial was surprising—surprising enough to be reported at length in the New York *Times*. In the comments that appeared in the press, however, there was again rather little criticism of the book. Instead what emerged was a divergence between "theorists" and "quantifiers" in social science. Those opposed to tenure for Starr wanted the Harvard department to develop along quantitative, empirical lines; Starr's work, they felt, was qualitative, i.e., theoretical, interpretative.

I want to look at Starr's book in some detail, for several reasons. First, although it deals with an important subject, and is widely viewed as authoritative, in fact it casts no light on any problem confronting American medicine. Instead, it obscures and confuses these problems, and presents a false picture both of medicine and of American society. Second, the book is highly revealing of current standards of sociological analysis and "theory." Finally, I want at least to raise the question of why such a bad book should have become so successful, and why people whose business it should be to uphold scholarly standards have praised it in terms that are not only exaggerated but completely false.

I

The Social Transformation of American Medicine is an ambitious, two-part survey of the development of American medicine from colonial times to the present. Its focus throughout is on the organizational and economic aspects of medical care: that is, medicine's "structure."

In Part I, Starr describes the early days of American medicine: the motley practitioners; their low social, educational, and economic standing; their lack of esteem or authority. He then traces the long climb upward that began, essentially, after the middle of the 19th century. Spurred by a

FLORENCE A. RUDERMAN is associate professor of sociology at Brooklyn College. She has recently completed two books, *Medicine, Science, and Society* and a textbook in the sociology of the family. Her article, "A Placebo for the Doctor," appeared in our May 1980 issue.

* First published in hardcover by Basic Books in 1983, it is now available in paperback (Basic Books, 514 pp., $11.95).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

number of factors, such as advances in biochemical sciences and improvements in travel and communications, the profession became more cohesive, and more assertive. At the same time, society's willingness to defer to medicine grew, again for a number of reasons, including (Starr maintains) a new social or political consciousness.

With its new militance, the profession embarked on a series of battles which, over the next decades, were to bring the entire field of health care under its exclusive domain. Thus, after gaining control of licensing, the profession drove rival health practitioners out of the field. Using a variety of tactics—boycotts, lawsuits, political pressures—it kept both government and industry out of direct involvement in the provision of medical care, and crushed almost all attempts to set up prepaid, group-care practices. And when the hospital became important (around the turn of the century), physicians mobilized again, this time to take control away from lay trustees and to ensure their own individual autonomy within the hospital setting: they became affiliates, not employees.

By the 1920's, physicians were a "sovereign" profession: uniquely solidary, with unquestioned authority, in full command of their territory, and with status and (in time) income to match. This rise, from lowliness to sovereignty, is what Starr calls the social transformation of American medicine, which he portrays as a long chain of defeats for the possibility of a liberal system of health care in the United States.

In Part II, Starr discusses the attempts to introduce national health insurance; the development of the private, or commercial, insurance system; and, after World War II, the increasing involvement of government in the nation's health care. In the last chapters, he views the present scene, painting a generally cheerless picture. One senses that he would prefer a system of national health insurance, or a national health service, but he never says so; nor does he examine the health-care system of any other society. He implies that present trends, such as the "pro-competition" plans for Medicare and Medicaid, and the rising proportion of hospitals run by "for-profit" corporations, are all further steps in the wrong (illiberal) direction. He hints that capitalist hospital owners may soon deprive medicine of its autonomy, and force it to become even more profit-oriented ("acquisitive") than it already is. But all of this appears obliquely, ambiguously, and at the very end Starr hedges even his ambiguities. "A trend," he advises, "is not necessarily fate. . . . Perhaps this picture . . . will prove to be a caricature. . . ."

II

PUT simply, Starr's "argument" in *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* is that physicians in the United States first achieved authority on questions of health care and then used this authority to structure medicine to their own social and economic advantage. These ideas are neither new nor especially illuminating. That American medicine has enjoyed (and to a lesser degree still enjoys) vast authority is undeniable; so is the fact that it has used it in its own interests. The question that needs to be answered concerns the *source* of that authority. What made Americans willing to exalt medicine, to defer to it, to cede great powers to it?

The usual explanation attributes medicine's high authority to the link it formed with modern science after the middle of the 19th century. This link brought some immediate gains in knowledge and effectiveness. More importantly, it brought the promise that, henceforward, medical knowledge would be verifiable knowledge, and that the healing power based on this knowledge would grow steadily through the steady advance of science. In later years, as the link with science was strengthened—and as dramatic breakthroughs did occur—medicine seemed to acquire the authority of science itself.

Starr rejects this view, and instead advances his own explanation, which comes in two parts. On medicine's part, he summarizes the actions taken by the profession in response to changing demographic conditions, advances in communications, and so forth, actions which both made the profession more cohesive and self-aware and extended its reach and control. But behind all of these actions he sees one force, and one force only: the profession's pursuit of wealth and power. In Starr's view, this pursuit is the sole motivation in medicine, it is the sole directive force in the institution-shaping behavior of physicians.

On society's part, Starr offers a much greater array of variables, but the central idea is "dependency." In the early years of the nation, Starr tells us, Americans were hardy, self-reliant types. They believed in themselves and in democracy, and they believed that medical problems were simple and could be solved by common sense. And so they had little need of, or respect for, medicine. But after the middle of the 19th century, Americans lost their self-assurance; they became increasingly dependent on outsiders. With this increased dependence came a new respect for, and a deference to, medicine.

What turned Americans into a dependent people? A host of factors, according to Starr: the decline of democracy (democracy ended, in the United States, around 1850); a loss of faith in the common man, and in common sense; a loss of pre-industrial skills that had made for self-sufficiency; increasing urbanization and industrialization; rising societal tensions and instabilities; the conflicts created by capitalism; the isolation of the nuclear family; the Progressives' search for a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new order; and science, which convinced men that the world was complex—not simple, as they had previously thought.

This, then, is Starr's argument. With regard to the behavior of the medical profession it contains a partial truth, although as an explanation of medicine's dynamics, or as a theory of its structural evolution, it is simply false. With regard to society the argument is nonsense.

III

STARR'S argument with regard to medicine is false because, no matter how important external forces may be, and no matter how powerful the drives to wealth and power, it is impossible to reduce the evolution of *any* institution or profession to these alone. There is always an inner content to be considered. And medicine, at least as much as any other profession, has such an inner content. It has its own purpose and functions, values and traditions, conflicts and dilemmas; it has a great and constantly developing body of knowledge, empirical and scientific. This content is dynamic; by itself it impels the field and shapes it, even its outer or "structural" aspects. At the risk of sounding naive—I have a more critical view of medicine than does Starr—I would stress that even medicine's *ideals* are components of the field. They too are real forces, with real effects.

I do not mean to suggest that medicine is shaped only from within, or only by positive forces. I do, however, insist that medicine has its own powerful inner content, and that its evolution cannot be explained apart from this content. I have written elsewhere about the general failure of medical sociology to incorporate a systematic study of medicine's content, and above all of its formal knowledge and the means by which that knowledge is translated into practice.* Because of the "externality" of medical sociology to medicine, the field is scientifically and intellectually weak. Starr's book is almost a parody of this externality, a supposedly "comprehensive" and "monumental" study in which the evolution of medicine is explained entirely by reference to outside, non-medical forces—and the drives of physicians to wealth and power.

In negating medicine's own content, Starr necessarily negates other forces, too—forces that exist outside of medicine but enter into it to become part of what impels and guides the field from within. Two are absolutely crucial: science and technology. Medicine, which is not itself a science, has a complex, problematic relationship with science; it has an equally distinctive relationship with technology. It is impossible to understand medicine's evolution and its place in society if these forces and relationships are not understood.

Starr does not understand them. He does briefly bring in science (and/or technology; they are essentially one to him), but to him "science" is a blank force that produces "diagnostic and therapeutic successes," or creates tools that enhance physicians' power over the patient while increasing their dependence on organizations, or adds to their "rhetoric," or is a "bolster" in their pursuit of wealth and power.

This is not even a child's understanding of science. Science is never a blank, it does not produce its successes or failures in a moral and intellectual vacuum. Science, moreover, is a profoundly unsettling force, undermining as well as building up; in medicine, it causes endless dislocations and conflicts. Most basically, science is a source of independent values, motives, norms of conduct, and criteria of judgment. It sets its own course, defines its own goals. As for technology, *its* impact on medicine is even more obvious and direct; again, not just in producing tools or power but in transmitting values and in shaping the field from within. One need only think of the artificial-heart cases now in the news to realize that the physicians involved are not simply pursuing money and political power but are impelled by a technological drive that has its own logic and values, its own momentum—and its own dangers.

There is another independently motivating force that Starr never mentions at all. However separate or "sovereign" medicine may be, it cannot be insulated from the moral, cultural, political, and intellectual currents that flow through society as a whole. Starr never credits the possibility that physicians might be influenced by the concerns of the wider society with, for example, democracy, justice, the humaneness of American institutions. But this is the case. With whatever delays or attenuations, society acts not only on medicine but also within it. One would not know this from Starr's argument.

IV

TO ILLUSTRATE the points I have been making, let us look at a single juncture in medicine's history, the battle for autonomy in the hospital. Starr's explanation is simplicity itself: physicians wanted autonomy in order to increase their profits; hospital trustees yielded because they needed the money the physicians brought in.

In fact, much more was involved, on both sides. First, a major role was played by the arguments of the physicians concerning the need for specialized knowledge, for "clinical judgment," and for a continuing, exclusive physician-patient relation-

* "What Is Medical Sociology?" *Journal of the American Medical Association*, March 6, 1981.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship. These arguments were persuasive because they reflected something beyond self-interest, namely, professional values and commitments that were, and are, appreciated by patients themselves. It takes considerable cynicism to see in them nothing but rationalization of economic motives.

There were other impelling forces within medicine as well, having to do with a number of features peculiar to the field and still plainly visible today. The unavoidable uncertainties of medical practice, the ever-present dangers, and the tension between claims of scientific knowledge on the one hand and the vast areas of ignorance on the other, generate enormous inner pressures and lead to a variety of self-protective mechanisms, such as evasiveness, secrecy, and the unwillingness to judge colleagues. The drive for medical autonomy within hospitals cannot be understood apart from these motives, which are not themselves economic in origin (though they may have economic consequences). Starr is unaware of their existence.

Moreover, the striving for autonomy, the desire for a distinct sphere of competence and responsibility and for freedom and control over one's work, a motive force in its own right, is manifested unversally in all professions; indeed it finds expression in nearly all work roles, including the lowliest and those in which motives of increasing wealth or societal power hardly apply. Remarkably, in a book that purports to be a "monumental" study of a profession, there is no mention of this aspect of professional life.

In the end, physicians won their battle because of still another force missing from Starr's argument. They won because hospital trustees, like society at large, accepted the principle that a profession is entitled to be self-governing. This principle has deep cultural roots, and is related to the values and traditions on which political democracy iteself rests. It is part of what made medicine's autonomy possible in the past, and part of what will maintain it—with modifications—in the future. It is precisely because he is unaware of *this* force that Starr is unable to offer the least clue regarding medicine's future, beyond dark hints that "capitalists" may soon turn physicians into mere tools of corporate profit-making. There is not the least chance of this, but with a "theory" that recognizes only competing economic and power drives, Starr could not know it.

With some knowledge of the history of professions generally, it might have occurred to Starr that the battle by physicians for autonomy in the hospital bears a striking similarity to the battles by professors for academic freedom, the principle that assures them a level of autonomy in colleges and universities which in some respects exceeds that of physicians in the hospital. Would Starr say that professors' autonomy was brought about by their greed or power drives? After all, academic freedom too can be abused, used for private gain rather than collective knowledge, and for propaganda or indoctrination. But the uses to which autonomy may be put, or the abuses to which it is subject, must be distinguished from the motives that lead to it and maintain it. And if Starr would grant that motivations other than the pursuit of wealth and power have been involved in the case of academics striving for autonomy, should he not tell us how it happens that no motivations *but* these have ever existed at all in the case of medicine?

V

STARR, as we saw, explains the increasing respect accorded to medicine after the middle of the 19th century by reference to a set of variables producing "dependency": the decline of democracy, the loss of pre-industrial self-sufficiency, and so on. Not only is this not true, it is almost exactly the opposite of the truth. American medicine owes its status and power not to negative factors destroying confidence and independence, but to the reverse. It was the very openness and promise of American life that led Americans to venerate medicine and delegate to it high—excessively high—authority.

Particularly important were a number of cultural traits that prevailed here as nowhere else. These included: a receptivity to science and technology, coupled with scientific backwardness; eagerness for progress; an acceptance of health and personal well-being ("the pursuit of happiness") as ultimate goals in life; and an optimistic, activist bias characterized by the belief that all problems, individual or collective, can be solved through the application of knowledge, technology, and enterprise. These, and not the waning of democracy, or the loss of a pre-industrial self-sufficiency, or the growth of the "isolated nuclear family," are what provided the moral basis for American medicine's ascendancy.

Most of this Starr never mentions, for just as he sees a medical profession impelled only by greed and power, so he see an American society devoid of positive features, at least after 1850. As he denies the relevance of Americans' admiration for science, in like fashion he denies the significance of the value Americans place on health and well-being, a value striking enough to have been noted by observers from Tocqueville on but one which Starr reduces to fads and psychobabble, and dismisses.

Starr's own explanation for the rise in the authority of medicine is specious in the extreme. The fact that this rise began after the closing of the frontier, or at a time when American society was becoming more urban and industrial, does not mean that these factors caused the rise, or were even necessary conditions of it. And as for those

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alleged variables with a political coloration—the decline of democracy, the loss of faith in the common man, the conflicts of capitalism, the increasing grimness of American life, etc.—these are all very dubious "facts" which owe their existence less to history than to a particular, and unavowed, political perspective. According to that perspective, after the Civil War a tiny, interlocked segment of the population gained control of American government and all other institutions and has since run them for the sake of its own enrichment and power, while the great bulk of the population has become increasingly alienated and powerless. This is the "radical elitist" theory of American history, and it obviously has much in common with Marxist theory. Starr sees no need to examine its assumptions, which to him are self-evident.

But consider the claim that if early Americans did not respect or defer to medicine, and post-Civil War Americans did, there must in the interim have occurred a loss of self-assurance, or a weakening of democracy. In fact, there is no need at all to bring in political or ideological factors to explain this change in attitudes or behavior; these were simply responses to a change in medicine itself, which after the middle of the 19th century became increasingly identified with science. Certainly people did, and do, overestimate the extent to which medicine's knowledge is scientific. But this has nothing to do with the supposed decline of democracy, the isolation of the nuclear family, or any of the rest.

Or consider the concept of "dependency," which goes, approximately, like this: as we turn to others for medical knowledge and advice, we lose faith in ourselves, in our own judgment and abilities, and thereby become less free. But this is nonsense. I depend on electricity; my great-grandmother did not. Thus I also depend on scientists, engineers, technicians, repairmen, and on industry and a distributive network; she did not. (What is more, having only a hazy idea of how to make a candle, I have "lost" a pre-industrial skill.) Does this mean that I have less confidence in myself, less faith in my own judgment and abilities? Does it mean that I am a more "dependent" person, less free, psychologically or politically? If anything, the truth is the other way around.

And what does this concept of dependency mean with regard to our relation to medicine? Does Starr mean that we are "overmedicalized"? No. He argues for *more* medicine, and against "neoconservatives" who, he says, would reduce the availability of medical care. Does he mean that we should rely more on our own judgment, that "common sense" in medical matters may be better than professional judgments? No, again. In his introduction we find this statement: "In general, patients are not the best judges of their own affairs; neither are their families." Does he mean that, if not for capitalism, industrialization, urbanization, and so on, we would not *be* patients? He never says this, either. Or does he mean simply that we should not allow physicians to be the sole judges of medicine's organization and economics? But this is a conclusion we as a society arrived at some time ago: physicians' exclusive control over medicine has ended, while all the factors that presumably created our dependency have remained in place, or intensified.

Starr's argument amounts to a complete muddle. Modern medicine arose in the latter part of the 19th century as society was becoming more complex, urban, industrial, scientific, technological. All of these factors are interrelated; they are all part of the world we live in—and on which we depend. If modern medicine did not exist, we wouldn't depend on it. (If planes didn't exist, we wouldn't fly.) Starr's is not an analysis, and not a theory. It tells us nothing of the multiplicity of forces that have determined medicine's course, and shape, and position in society; it elucidates no specific relationships in medicine's continuing evolution. It is a diffuse and tendentious tautology.

VI

PART I of Starr's book ends with medicine a mighty monolith, holding all of society at bay. Part II, which deals with developments after World War II, shows something completely different. Medicine has suffered a stunning loss of authority; it is being challenged, questioned, criticized on all sides. Its structure, too, is weakening, as government, business, and the public at large make increasing inroads into its "sovereignty." On the basis of Starr's argument in Part I, these changes are not only unexpected, they are completely incomprehensible. And sure enough, Starr abandons his argument completely. We never hear of it again.

Instead, Starr now attributes medicine's loss of authority to a general decline in the authority of *all* professions in the 70's; to the rise of the "women's movement"; and to "therapeutic nihilism," by which term he refers to the views of a number of writers—physicians, economists, and others—who, in different ways, have questioned medicine's effectiveness in dealing with some of modern society's most prevalent illnesses. Among other things, these analysts have suggested that huge, federally-financed medical programs may not be the best approach to illnesses which are at least partly social or psychological in origin. In a characteristically distorted discussion, Starr lumps these writers together with Ivan Illich, a radical Catholic social theorist who has argued that medicine should be abandoned altogether, along with science, industry, and most of the values and institutions of the modern world.

Even apart from the distortions and misrepre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sentations, however, this is an *ad hoc* and completely external explanation of a phenomenon with roots deep within medicine itself, and long antedating the factors Starr cites. The public loss of authority parallels and in part reflects an inner crisis in medicine, which has become increasingly self-critical and self-questioning. It reflects, also, a growing scientific sophistication in society, which makes people increasingly unwilling to accept claims on faith. And it involves the continuing action of American society's own enduring norms and values, which press for rationality, openness, fairness, equality. But these are forces that have no existence in Starr's book.

Most of Part II, however, is devoted to the changes now coming about in medicine's structure: its organization, financing, regulation. Here, Starr does not even have *ad hoc* explanations to offer.

The postwar decades saw a vast expansion of medical programs and services, of hospitals and neighborhood health centers, of medical schools and medical research. The government began to plan for health care on a national basis, and took the first steps toward coordinating the nation's huge and fragmented health-care system. Health insurance grew, at first largely through the spread of private policies and union medical plans and then, in 1965, through the passage—despite the opposition of the medical profession—of Medicare and Medicaid. The profession, which had always been able to defeat unwelcome legislation, now offered much more accommodating counterproposals, and ultimately acquiesced, reaping great economic gains in the short run but at the same time yielding some of its hitherto inviolate "sovereignty" and thus making further erosions inevitable.

These changes, and many others that Starr never mentions, produced far-reaching effects. They completely altered the face of American medicine. The benefits they conferred —in increased availability of medical care, in rising indices of use, in improved health, in falling death rates—were dramatic. But Starr gives little credit to society, or to medicine, for this progress. Instead, every advance, every extension of entitlements, every massive investment in medical services, facilities, education, and research is discussed cynically, and characterized as a diversion or a missed opportunity. His chapter titles and subheadings tell the story: "The Mirage of Reform"; "Grand Illusions"; "Health Care in a Blocked Society."

Throughout, the view of American society is negative, the tone derisive and patronizing. Increased public attention to questions of the availability and quality of American medicine is treated not as a widening of social consciousness, nor even as a strengthening of a popular claim to health care as a right, but as a growth of hypochondria, spurred by Henry Luce and the drug manufacturers. Truman's proposal for national health insurance in 1945 is said to have failed because of the cold war. Starr relegates to a murky footnote the fact that opinion polls of the time showed a minority of the public in favor of the bill; that there could be grounds for opposing it other than those of displaced anti-Communism is never suggested. Nixon's liberal health-care policies are treated as attempts to buy popularity and to "divert attention from the Watergate affair." Medicaid was passed not so much to provide medical care for the poor, as to "cover . . . bad debts for hospitals." And so on. Finally, when progress cannot be wholly dismissed as a diversion or a mirage, it becomes a lapse: thus the two great health-care acts of the 60's, which brought health-insurance coverage to almost 90 percent of the population, were a fluke, passed "at a rare moment of liberal political success. . . ."

Belittle as he will, however, Starr cannot disguise the fact that an enormous liberalization of medicine has taken place. But how, if one's attitude toward American society and American capitalism is negative and derisive, if one regards progress as an illusion and reform as a mirage, if one sees medicine as motivated solely by the pursuit of wealth and power, can the sweeping changes of these decades be explained?

Starr does not really try. He offers instead, these sentences:

> It was as if an internal dynamic were playing itself out in the postwar decades. In virtually the classic Marxist fashion, the forces of production in health services—government subsidies, private insurance, technology, consumer demand—were breaking down the old social relations of production and preparing the way for more decisive change. . . .

Ponder these "classic Marxist forces of production": government subsidies, i.e., massive public programs directed to the disadvantaged, social and medical services for the nation as a whole, federal financing of medical education and research; private insurance, chiefly union-sponsored insurance plans and the incorporation of health care into collective-bargaining agreements between labor unions and employers; technology; consumer demand. Now, ponder the equally "classic Marxist" product: health services. This is not Marxism; it is Marx-babble.

But it is not funny. Starr's book does not reflect a coherent Marxist viewpoint; it does not reflect a coherent viewpoint of any sort. What it shows is that, without their necessarily being Marxists or taking consistently Marxist positions, for Starr and other sociologists like him the only available ideas are Marxist ideas. Ultimately there is no other intellectual or scientific baggage, no other theories or modes of thought that they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

know or consider respectable. Given such an impoverishment of both knowledge and thought, is it to be wondered at that Starr fails to understand American medicine, or the American society of which it is a part?

VII

PHYSICIANS, on the whole, have difficulty dealing with all of the social-scientific studies now inundating medicine. It is not surprising that the editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* has been impressed by Starr's "command of social forces." The C. Wright Mills Award for Starr's book is entirely appropriate. And as for the Pulitzer Prize, well, Starr's argument with regard to medicine is one that has broad appeal (and even, as I have indicated, some justice); and his argument with regard to society, with its muddled discussion of the decline of democracy, the evils of industrialization, the pathos of the "isolated nuclear family," and so on, rings bells in liberal ears. That it is meaningless is obviously secondary.

But what is one to say of sociologists, including some of the most distinguished in America today, who fail to recognize this kind of "study" for what it is—or who do recognize it, and join in the acclaim anyway? What is one to say of a field in which this kind of work is not only accepted but hailed as "brilliant" and "lucid"?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Professor Vendler's Garden of Verses

James Gardner

It is a commonplace that the putting-together of a literary anthology is in itself a creative act. One might even be justified in invoking Harold Bloom's already too-famous phrase and say that an "anxiety of influence" pursues anthologists no less than poets, for anthologists are interested not only in promoting those poets they most admire, but also in assailing earlier anthologists upon whose compilations they may themselves have been bred. Thus it is that dead poets who have found no place in earlier collections are duly dug up, poets included in previous anthologies are either cut down to a more manageable size or dismissed without a word of explanation, and upstarts of the newest generation suddenly find themselves rubbing elbows with venerable elders.

By its very title, one might think that the new *Harvard Book of Contemporary American Poetry*, edited by the well-known critic Helen Vendler,* would concentrate precisely on the last-named of these groups, and that any controversy aroused by this anthology would touch upon her choice of younger poets. Yet in the event, these selections turn out to be quite unremarkable. Much more surprising in a book billed as a compilation of "contemporary" verse is the great preponderance of older poets (many of whom are long dead), and even among these poets, Professor Vendler's selections are highly unusual.

There is, to be sure, a problem of definition here. A question to which Professor Vendler does not really address herself in her otherwise not uninformative introduction is the meaning that should be given to the word "contemporary" when applied to poetry. In the visual arts, although the term *can* mean works created in the post-World War II period, it is used most often to refer to the art being created right now, an art whose nebulous origins can be but dimly glimpsed in the dark age prior to 1980. Contemporary art may be allowed to extend back to Andy Warhol and Jasper Johns in the early 60's, because they are still very much with us, but it would seem peculiar to hear Jackson Pollock or Henri Matisse called a contemporary artist. Analogously, in poetry the word contemporary would refer to poets who are not only alive today but whose contribution is ongoing. Thus John Ashbery would be included because he continues to develop, in addition to being very influential with today's younger poets, while Allen Ginsberg would be left out because his main influence was felt in the 60's, and to the extent that he still writes he is more or less repeating what he did twenty-five years ago.

Professor Vendler may intend the word contemporary to be taken in its larger sense, referring to poetry written after 1945; yet even if it were conceded that this is a worthy aim, since World War II does not mark so great a division in poetry as it does in the visual arts she would still have much to answer for. What, for instance, is Wallace Stevens doing here, especially when she has left out T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, all of whom outlived him by rather a few years? Why is Langston Hughes included, when he is associated with the Harlem Renaissance of the 20's and even then was not the best black poet? What are Theodore Roethke's poems from the 30's doing here, or those of Randall Jarrell, who was never all that influential or all that good, as Professor Vendler herself would seem to agree, given the meager space she allots him? And it is also worth asking why poets surely better than many included here have been left out, among them Robert Penn Warren who is, if nothing else, very influential with the newest generation.

The upshot is that Professor Vendler does not exhibit a deep sense of where the roots of today's poetry really lie, or at any rate she fails to communicate her ideas successfully either in her introduction or in her selections of older and younger poets. The reader who approaches this anthology in search of enlightenment about our nation's poetry either in the 20th century overall or in the present generation specifically will probably not come away with anything other than a hazy and inexact general impression. And since the poetry included in this volume spans most of the century, there is also the danger that it will be mistaken for a wildly eccentric and misleading compilation of 20th-century American verse.

It must be said in Professor Vendler's defense, however, that she has managed to communicate a

James Gardner has written for Commentary, *Art News*, and the *New Criterion*. His review of Robert Penn Warren's *New and Selected Poems 1923-1985* appeared in our November issue.

* Harvard University Press, 440 pp., $20.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense of the diversity of the poetry of our time without sacrificing her sense of quality. Resolutely representing each "tendency"—whether in feminist, homosexual, or black poetry, or indeed any other —she persuades us that while certain voices have not always been included solely upon the basis of their poetic merit, if they had not demonstrated such merit they would not have been included at all.

In giving us the work of an individual poet, moreover, Professor Vendler conscientiously conveys an idea of his general achievement without trying to shape him into something other than he is. She also attempts to be at all times characteristic in her selection, so that the reader who comes to a poet for the first time in this anthology will have a fair notion of his overall output. One would imagine that the poets, too, would be happy with the selections, because Professor Vendler has almost always shown them at their best. Finally, the newcomer to this often difficult and hieratic poetry will be grateful for Professor Vendler's choice of those poems which, in addition to being the best and most characteristic, also tend to be fairly readily understood.

II

In her introduction, Professor Vendler has some thoughtful and thought-provoking things to say about the poetry and the poetic language of modern America. "This anthology," she begins, "will be able to extend its charm only to those who genuinely know the American language—by now a language separate, in accent, intonation, discourse, and lexicon, from English."

A kernel of truth is undeniably present in this statement: there is surely a difference between the English spoken in the United States and the English of the British Isles, and our spoken idiom is apt to find its way into the poems that contemporary Americans write. But to say that the poetry here presented will appeal only to those "who genuinely know the American language" is, as I understand it, to say that it will be appreciated solely by people who either were born here or have lived here for some time, and this is probably not so. I do not know how it feels not to be a native American, but since I am able, without being British or French, to understand Philip Larkin's somewhat dialectal "British" English, or the French of Blaise Cendrars, it would seem to me possible for a foreigner with little background in our specific use of the language to appreciate the poetry in this anthology. The point is simply that it is one thing to know a language actively, that is, to be able to speak it and write it, and entirely another thing to know it passively, that is, to understand what is written or spoken in it.

But more important than this, surely, is the fact that the crucial distinction between American and British English is one of vocabulary rather than one of grammar or word order. And the difference that does exist with respect to vocabulary usually has less to do with the names we give to things (with the exception of such obvious differences as saying "elevator" instead of "lift") than with certain expressions, mostly slang, which we sometimes substitute for ordinary words in order to make a statement more emphatic. When our poets use such slang and other conspicuously American expressions, they do so in order to accentuate primarily the emotional rather than the thematic thrust of a poem, and this merely reinforces the point made earlier, that even so idiomatic a language as that of much modern American poetry will be readily understood by non-native foreigners as long as they have had some grounding in the English that exists at the crossroads of all its dialectal aberrations.

In defining American English, Professor Vendler calls it "a language that has assimilated the syncopation of jazz, the stylishness of advertising, the technicalities of psychoanalysis, the simplicities of rural speech, the discourse of the university disciplines, the technology of the engineer, the banalities of journalism." This she contrasts with "the principal English vocabulary of lark, primrose, and cottage farm." In this statement she would appear, astonishingly, to subscribe to the notion that England is a nation of butlers. One wonders what she would make of these robust lines by Larkin, who was considered for the position of England's Poet Laureate:

> They fuck you up, your mum and dad,
> They may not mean to, but they do,
> They fill you with the faults they had
> And add some extra, just for you.

As is evident to anyone who has thumbed through an anthology of recent British poetry, all those "modern" expressions that inform American poetry, though not in the degree that Professor Vendler believes, are to be found with equal force in the works of our transatlantic brethren.

The truth of the matter is that, rather than there being a distinctly American way of writing poetry, the predominant idiom in all European languages today is as much governed by a single aesthetic as was the poetry of the 17th, 18th, or 19th century. As the Mexican poet Octavio Paz has remarked, "There is not (there has never been) a French poetry, an Italian, Spanish, or English: there was a poetry of the Renaissance, a Baroque poetry, a Romantic poetry. There is a contemporary poetry written in all the languages of the West."

One could even say that in many respects contemporary poetry is more strikingly homogeneous than poetry ever was in the other epochs mentioned by Paz. And while it is true that the emergence of the United States as a world power has placed English in a position to influence other languages more than ever before, the poems in Professor Vendler's anthology are nevertheless recognizable first as contemporary poetry and only then as some uniquely American creation in which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a distinct body of our fellow citizens share and poets of other nationalities just as distinctly do not.

III

STILL, if Professor Vendler has not presented a convincing case either for an autonomous American language or for a distinctly American poetry, in her comments on contemporary poetry as Americans write it she is often accurate. In referring to John Berryman, for example, she points to a pervasive feature among all contemporary poets which she describes as an "imaginative claim to a personal territory." The importance of this factor can scarcely be overestimated: every single poet included in this volume has in some way been touched profoundly by the quest for a unique voice or manner.

This same quest for individuality, it need hardly be said, has dramatically characterized all the arts for over a century now. But its presence is somehow more neurotically insistent in poetry than in any other art form. The reason for this is that, of all the arts, undistinguished poetry, and undistinguished lyric poetry especially, is least able to offer a convincing excuse for its existence. A novel may not be very distinctive stylistically, but as long as the narrative is done with reasonable competence, the illusion of reality created by the novelist will be sufficiently compelling to keep the reader's interest. The same may be said of a mediocre play or film, in which there is also the possibility of a good performance or a beautiful leading lady. Similarly, a fair piece of music still has the power to charm, and a mediocre work of visual art, even if less forgivable, can afford the sort of pleasure that derives from pure passages of color or the vivid representation of images; in addition, being a physical, possessable thing, a work of art can be exchanged for capital.

In contrast with all these, a mediocre and unoriginal lyric poem (for only lyric poetry is really being written today) can neither create an extended illusion, nor impinge directly upon any organ of sense, nor present us with the simulacrum of anything that would actually please if it were real, nor, finally, be bought or sold. A poem, in short, must be excellent or it has no reason for being. And since the excellence of modern poetry is defined by nothing so much as the persuasive individuality of the author, the poet must be entirely himself or he is nothing; thus does the quest for originality become a quest for poetic survival.

This was not always true, and it is to be regretted that we may never again be in a position to admire a poet for his conformity with a prevenient tradition. Among the poets included in Professor Vendler's anthology, it is only the best who occasionally let us forget that so much of what they write has been influenced by the compelling necessity to be at all costs original.

This obsessive clamoring for a distinctive idiom manifests itself both in what is being said and in the manner of its expression. Implicit is the conviction, shared by audience and poets alike, that poetry must be existentially at variance with the general order of things, and that all its practitioners should assume the role of the accursed and antisocial *poète maudit*. We live in an age of Catullus and Ovid with no one to aspire to the grandeur of Virgil or Horace. Although there is no reason, in theory, that a great poet could not emerge equal to the task of honoring the nature of things, given the expectations of publishers and reviewers and readers, such a poet would soon enough know what it means to be truly *maudit*. One has only to consider the confusion and chagrin induced in certain British poets recently when they discovered that they were being considered for the poet laureateship of England.

The man who was ultimately chosen for that position, Ted Hughes, is, at least in his poems, something of a wild man, probably best known to Americans for having been married to the legendary Slyvia Plath, herself included in Professor Vendler's anthology, where she can be found declaring, in a not uncharacteristic passage:

> It stuck in a barb wire snare.
> Ich, ich, ich, ich,
> I could hardly speak.

There are obvious similarities between this sort of thing and these lines by Charles Wright:

> Flash click tick, flash click tick, light
> Through the wavefall—electrodes, intolerable
> curlicues;
> Splinters along the skin, eyes
> Flicked by the sealash, spun, pricked;
> . . . . . .

The vast majority of the poems included in this anthology strive consciously for such roughness, constantly demonstrating the desire to violate the politeness and poise associated with the poetry of earlier times. Indeed, the alacrity with which our poets assail the superannuated conventions of their art is at the same time something of a political statement, stressing the ascendancy of the individual will, of "man's unconquerable mind" (as Wordsworth says), over the tyrannous and inhibiting forces of society. But the ineluctable irony at the center of such violent expressions is that these outbursts are what society more or less requires of its poets.

This intricate and involved paradox, of a society in rebellion against itself and an aesthetic which is nonconformist at the behest of the very forces with which it will not conform, casts an unflattering light upon all but the very best poets collected in Professor Vendler's anthology. After all, if society had not set its canon against convention, most of these poets would eagerly be writing sonnets and heroic couplets, taking neurotic care to make sure that all their syllables added up and also that their moral fiber was suitably in evidence. Or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are we to believe that the human race, in a period of scarcely two hundred years, has undergone such a transformation that whereas most poets once seemed pious stuffed shirts and Tories, now through their own unassisted inclinations they have become honest, free-spirited, and bumptious?

One of the more interesting turns that this rebellion takes, if something so consistently sanctioned may be called a rebellion, is a kind of subversion of poetic form from within. This makes use of many of the older conventions of traditional poetry but in such a way as to cast the more contemporary elements into dramatic relief. In her anthology, Professor Vendler has included several such poets, among them Theodore Roethke, Howard Nemerov, Robert Lowell, and James Merrill. Why is it, for example, that the following lines by Roethke (which are not included in Professor Vendler's anthology) could not have been written in the 18th or 19th century?

Should every creature be as I have been,
There would be reason for essential sin;
I have myself an inner weight of woe
That God himself can scarcely bear.

Wherein precisely consists the contemporaneity of this first quatrain of a Shakespearean sonnet by Nemerov?

We who survived the war and took to wife
And sired the kids and made the decent living,
And piecemeal furnished forth the finished life
Not by grand theft so much as petty thieving—

Or this, from a sonnet by Merrill?

We love the good, said Plato? He was wrong.
We love as well the wicked and the weak.
Flesh hugs its shaved plush. Twenty-four-hour-long
Galas fill the hulk of the Comique.

What is striking in all three of these excerpts is the smugness of the self-condemnation, in which Nemerov includes the rest of his generation and Merrill would seem to include the rest of Western society. In their attacks upon complacency these poets declare themselves to be sinful, thieving, and wicked—but less, one feels, out of any genuine self-hatred than out of a self-satisfied regard for their own becoming waywardness. Contrast these lines by Donne in one of his Holy Sonnets:

I am a little world made cunningly
Of Elements, and an Angelike spright,
But black sinne has betraid to endless night
My world both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.

Unlike Donne, our three authors do not use the "I" in a universal sense, and unlike other earlier poets they do not attack a universal failing impersonally. Instead they externalize their own putative failings in such a way as never quite to reflect discredit upon themselves, but rather to endow themselves with a kind of glamorous antiheroism.

This attitude has formal implications. If it is essential that today's poets assert their radical individuality, one way to accomplish this is by locating themselves in opposition to poetic tradition. Thus it is that on the battlefields of their poems they seem constantly to be waging the same war that Eliot and Pound won for them unconditionally in the first quarter of the 20th century. Occasionally this will take the form of a mannered and thoroughgoing obedience to the metrical canon of the past, in which the unmodulated iambic pentameter rolls on with a monotony whose effect is only to confirm most people's convictions that no one should write that way any more; to this formal insipidity is then added a formal waywardness—parallel to that spiritual waywardness I have already mentioned—such as the inexplicable absence of rhyme in Roethke's third and fourth lines as well as the missing foot in the fourth, or the curious admixture in Nemerov of the grandiose and the banal in phrases like "sired the kids." Then there are such blandly pat and alliterative lines as "And piecemeal furnished forth the finished life" and "We love as well the wicked and the weak," written as it were within quotation marks and understood to allude to formal conventions to which, it is implicitly signaled, the poet does not wholly subscribe. Thus do the struggles of early modernism continue to play themselves out in ever more effete and self-conscious forms.

IV

Helen Vendler makes a great deal of the influence on contemporary poetry of Wallace Stevens, who is (as I have already noted) the only poet of Eliot and Pound's generation to be included in her anthology. In one sense she may be right to include him, not only on account of his manifest excellence but also for his cultivation of a kind of superfine disengagement this is enjoying a reinvigorated vogue among today's poets. Yet if Stevens is to be judged more highly than Eliot, as he often is nowadays, he deserves the distinction only by virtue of his more copious productivity, which adheres more consistently to a very high standard. There is nevertheless something reassuringly human in Eliot's variations in standard, and this human quality endows his poetry at certain priceless moments with a grandeur and profundity which Stevens never matches.

The conditioned reader of Stevens's poetry in due course comes up against an overwhelming sense of limitation, a feeling that just as there is a high level below which Stevens does not fall, so there is another level, only slightly higher, beyond which he will never go. Although there is an undeniable beauty to many of his poems, which most of the poets in this volume will never realize the half of, still that beauty seldom alters its form,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seldom varies in the degree of its intensity, and seems at all times to be placed in the service of one solitary idea (which is, paradoxically, the need for ridding oneself of ideas). Generations may pass before any of Stevens's countless commentators has the courage to avow that the poet has moments of greater and lesser lucidity, during the latter of which he becomes more or less incoherent, and that he does best when he surrenders entirely to his unsurpassed gift for appealing to the eye through the ear, as in the well-known opening lines of "Sunday Morning," the poem which more than any other may be said to have made his reputation:

> Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
> Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
> And the green freedom of a cockatoo. . . .

Multiply this by five hundred pages, and you have the unique achievement of Wallace Stevens. The reader who forsakes the search for coherence in Stevens, and is willing to surrender himself wholly to the music, will find his greatest satisfaction in opening Stevens's books to any page and reading a few lines at a time. Such is the frequency with which critics and scholars have quoted Stevens, and such is the nature of his poetic gifts, that few modern poets would be better served by suffering the fate of Sappho and Sir Walter Raleigh, whose primary texts have all been lost and who survive only in those numerous and choice fragments that their contemporaries could not forget. For there comes a point in Stevens's poetry in which his method simply breaks down, and the attentive reader perceives through the mists of superabundant gorgeousness a human being struggling to make a good showing, hoping that his disconnected images will somehow pass for a theme of philosophical consequence.

In this regard, as in others, Stevens resembles that contemporary poet who, despite all their differences, most deserves to be called his disciple, John Ashbery. Ashbery shares with Stevens an aversion to ideas, and this is manifested in a similar failing (perhaps his only one), namely, the inability to persuade us that his many beautiful images have been invented to fit a larger whole. Yet Ashbery's poems, free of Stevens's icy formalism, also have an endearing commonsensicality that you will not find in Stevens. One of his principal virtues is a genuine humor, another a sensitivity to the ceaseless continuum of life on earth. Most of Ashbery's poems seem to take place in the afternoon, in the hours of purest sunlight, and during this perennial siesta Ashbery finds a context in which to distill the quintessence of Stevens's "pure being," capturing it not only in what he says but in the very syllables he speaks:

> All we know
> Is that we are a little early, that
> Today has that special, lapidary
> Todayness that the sunlight reproduces
> Faithfully in casting twig-shadows on blithe
> Sidewalks. No previous day would have
> been like this.
> I used to think they were all alike,
> That the present always looked the same to
> everybody

Or this (like the above, from "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror"):

> Hasn't it too its lair
> In the present we are always escaping from
> And falling back into, as the waterwheel of days
> Pursues its uneventful, even serene course?

Ashbery has managed to intimidate many of his readers through the impenetrable entanglements of images and words in some of his poems, but there he is merely mistaking the nature of his own virtues, as though, having read too many of his exegetes, he actually has deluded himself into thinking he was ever able to articulate something of an intellectual heftiness. In fact, his sole virtue, considerable in itself, is that limpidity and directness which he must struggle never to lose sight of.

V

Stevens and Ashbery are almost alone in this anthology in being resolutely bored by politics. The most perverse statement of Stevens's inability to understand much besides his own poetry is to found in his "Prose Statement on the Poetry of War." Amid the mirthless gravity of World War II he delivered an opinion so characteristically opaque and narcissistically stylized that I for one have never been able to make much of it, nor have I ever heard anyone give a convincing explanation of what he was trying to say. As for the rest, Professor Vendler says it best in her introduction: "These poets also, many of them, write within a post-Marxist clouding of the American self-image: voices of protest rise from women (Plath, Sexton, Rich), from blacks (Hayden, Harper, Dove), from the dispossessed (James Wright), from the counterculture (Snyder), from self-declared homosexuals and lesbians (Ginsberg, Rich), from Americans in opposition to American foreign policy (Lowell, Merwin)."

In selecting works by these political poets, Professor Vendler has on the whole shied away from their more tendentious efforts, whose artistry is not infrequently stifled by the vehemence of their advocacy. In the case of Adrienne Rich, however, it is paradoxically true that her activist bent has liberated her from many of the preoccupations that so often impede the poetry of the other women, and indeed the other men, in this anthology. For she alone seems to believe that poetry has a purpose more important than the poetry itself, and while historically such a belief has led to propagandistic doggerel aspiring to nothing higher than inciting revolts in factories, in the case of Miss Rich it seems to have spared her the anxiety of trying first and foremost to find an original voice. It is as though her ability to write

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well derived from her not being afraid to write badly. Her tone of voice is usually clear, direct, and unmannered, and the sincerity of her poetry is one of its greatest virtues. Thus, reminiscing about her grandmother:

I see you walking up and down the garden,
restless, southern-accented, reserved, you did
not seem
my mother's mother or anyone's grandmother.
You were Mary, widow of William, and no
matriarch,
yet smoldering to the end with frustrate life,
ideas nobody listened to, least of all my father.

By contrast, in the work of another woman, the late Elizabeth Bishop, who is an equally good but not a better poet, there is always uppermost a concerted striving after victory over unyielding meters and challenging and arcane subjects. Like her friend James Merrill, with whom she has much in common, Elizabeth Bishop always seeks a fine-spun reconstitution of the material world into something rich and strange, one that will be purer than all the imperfections and fatigue of the flesh. Like Marianne Moore and Stevens, she is too vain to allow herself ever to be seen except in full dress, yet her creations are somewhat less agile than those of the two older poets, and the striving which they manage to conceal is not infrequently too evident in her verse.

Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath, who both committed suicide, are as a rule too unbalanced to take much interest in anything outside of their own problematic psyches; they may be considered feminists only in the sense that they cultivate a shrillness designed to explode any myth of woman as a soft and caressable creature. In Plath's poetry there is furthermore an unassuageable anger directed both against her own father and against the institution of maternity, as though she intended to sever herself even from these last and heretofore indestructible bonds of human nature. As for the vaunted confessional integrity of her poems, any conscientious reader must at some point begin to harbor the distasteful suspicion that in submitting them for publication, Plath forfeited all title to honesty and was aiming for something else entirely: namely, fame and the esteem of her readers.

How different from this filial and maternal abdication is the renowned "Kaddish" of Allen Ginsberg, a long poem which Professor Vendler has had the bounty to quote in full. The tone of this poem has all of the vigor and little of the stridency of Ginsberg's later homoerotic and anti-capitalist works, which rarely rise above pornography on the one hand and sophomoric propaganda on the other. It is written in the paragraph stanzas of Whitman, and while Professor Vendler asserts that Whitman is "our greatest American poet," I would say that there is in Ginsberg's use of the language a higher consistency of condensation, which partakes more fully of what we usually mean by poetry.

Ginsberg is in one sense quite similar to Ashbery, to whom, in so many other respects, he is diametrically opposed. Both men have only one virtue, but a pervasive and an idiosyncratic one, for the exercise of which it is essential that Ashbery be entirely Ashbery and Ginsberg entirely Ginsberg. We should not go to them for a classic or definitive utterance of anything other than themselves, and it would be foolhardy to expect from them a carefully reasoned or even clever meditation on anything. Rather, the pleasure to be derived from their poetry is the pleasure that arises out of a certain conjunction of syllables to which only they know the secret. If the reader develops a taste for this conjunction, he will seek it out in their poetry, and no matter what the ostensible subject matter, as long as the treatment is identifiably theirs it will give delight. As with that other long poem that Professor Vendler gives in its entirety, Ashbery's "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror," so in "Kaddish" the reader may find his greatest pleasure to consist as much in dipping into it anywhere as in reading it as a coherent narrative.

VI

Helen Vendler's selection of poets from the latest generation, like Dave Smith, Louise Glück, Albert Goldbarth, Jorie Graham, and Rita Dove, really cannot be faulted, since they are all fairly representative, and none of them is conspicuously bad. But perhaps it will serve as a sufficient indictment of the present state of American poetry to note that she could easily have found ten or twenty other poets of equal quality without too drastic an alteration in the overall effect of this final part of her anthology. This is not to say that they are unoriginal, or even that they are ostensibly very similar to one another; the virtue of uniqueness is after all a precondition for their inclusion. But since none of them rises to too conspicuous an eminence over his contemporaries, taken together they cannot but give the sense of a drab and uninspiring coda tacked on to the more serious business that came before.

The title of precedence over all other living American poets will now have to be fought out by Ginsberg and Ashbery. Yet, at the risk of concluding upon a lugubrious note, it must be admitted that neither in America nor abroad is there now an English-language poet of the very highest stature, or even one approaching that slightly lower stature of Eliot, Stevens, and Yeats.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dinner With Butler and Eisenhower

A Columbia Memoir

Edward Le Comte

One does not hear the word "dignity" anymore, except in the curious phrase "dying with dignity." Nobody speaks of living with dignity. And dying with dignity has only a negative meaning: pulling the plug or the tubes. It could mean something positive, like bidding a moving farewell, but it doesn't. Even great men and women, from whom we expect and in the past received memorable last words, now die in hospitals, instead of at home surrounded by family and friends and followers. One is drugged, unconscious, impersonally attended if at all. Einstein said something in German, a language the nurse didn't understand. You're lucky to be in bed: Adlai Stevenson toppled over in a public place.

Stevenson is certainly one of those who lived with dignity, except on one—to me disappointing—occasion. In the 1950's a photographer for *Life* persuaded various public figures to leap up in the air, with arms raised. There were pages of jumping jacks, feet off the floor, Stevenson among them. I forget what it was meant to show. Herbert Hoover refused to pose, thereby rising in my estimation.

Had he been alive, Nicholas Murray Butler, who was president of Columbia University from 1901 to 1945, would also have refused. He was by far the most dignified person I ever had contact with, the most solid of images of a university president. Now they look like insurance salesmen, if not hippies. But dignity is fragile, as valets know. The university magazine, *Columbia*, of all periodicals, recently set out to lower "Nicholas the Miraculous" (as he was called on campus) by harking back to him as candidate for public office.* We know what that does to a man. He becomes an atrocious slogan: "Pick Nick for a Picnic in November." And we are told in the article that his wife was a shrew. She did not seem so to me on the one evening I spent with them. But of course he was the one who would know. (He had fair warning: her name was Kate.) I can't imagine him ever telling. He dedicated the second volume of his memoirs, *Across the Busy Years* (1940), "To Her who for more than three and thirty of these busy years has been my companion, my inspiration, and my guide."

I have three diplomas signed by him: A.B., 1939; M.A., 1940; Ph.D., 1943. The first is in Latin, the others in English. I actually could read the Columbia College one: that was what graduating in liberal arts once meant. I offered to translate—for fifty cents, for some of my classmates on commencement day. I was A.B. but needy. That the postgraduate diplomas were in the vulgar tongue recalled a barb by philosophy professor Irwin Edman in an undergraduate course in aesthetics that admitted a few graduate students as auditors. Professor Edman would drop a French phrase—*mélange des genres*, for example—and add, "Since there are some graduate students present, I will translate."

Earlier in 1939 I had had my first glimpse of the president, moving with black derby and cane-measured steps past *The Thinker* outside Philosophy Hall. I knew he had been a professor of philosophy in the 19th century and was now in his thirty-eighth year as president, awesome facts both. I have antiquarian tastes and even when young was prone to respect old ideas, old languages, old men and women, and longevity for its own sake. It was tempting to approach that grave, solitary figure, but what appropriate noises could I make? Ten years later a student whistled "Roar Lion Roar" at the new president of the university, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and won a smile. I had a feeling that Butler did not easily smile, at least not at seventy-seven or subsequently.

After that first commencement, favored with the usual fine "Columbia weather," a scene where thousands upon thousands were carefully and colorfully mustered and each school stood up for its collective blessing, I got to wondering about Butler's signature on my diploma. It was obviously not a stamp. My alma mater does not do things cheaply. But how could he personally sign thousands of these documents? I went over to the

Edward Le Comte, professor emeritus of English at the State University of New York at Albany, was associated with Columbia University as student and teacher for a total of twenty-six years.

* "Have Speech, Will Travel," by Richard M. Gammere, Jr., October 1984.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

registrar's office to inquire. At the window I was told he "was present" when they were signed. What? Your signature is yours as long as you are present when someone else signs it? This did not satisfy. I had worked hard, paid much, for that quality paper. I returned the next day and got a different official who spoke of some sort of writing gadget, a pen attached to many pens, all moving at the same time over a vast table. Having majored in English I thought of the death of Falstaff in *Henry V*: "His nose was as sharp as a pen and a table of green fields" (according to the somewhat puzzling First Folio text). The green fields were Florida, where our president wintered before facing that scribbling ordeal. "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, / Moves on."

A few days later he moved on to the biggest ceremony ever, one which I was privileged to witness, the convocation on campus, on the afternoon of June 10, for the King and Queen of England, George VI and Elizabeth. Tickets to that were as hard to obtain as now to the Superbowl. As a mere degree-holder I was not entitled to one. As a very lowly employee I was. I had taken a job as a page in the library, then called South Hall, to tide me over until the fall, when I would receive a stipend as Proudfit Fellow in Letters. I was ashamed of my gray cotton coat of servitude; when my teacher and idol Mark Van Doren came up to the circulation desk for a book and had a shock of recognition it was as nothing to my impulse to drop to the floor. It was honest employment, but what shall I say—undignified? But it did get me a grandstand seat (no, let us not exaggerate, a grandstand stand—I peered over shoulders) for the convocation, as the comely royal couple were, as it were, crowned again by "Miraculous" in his scarlet—was it Cambridge University?—gown and pancake black velvet hat. She wore the same sort of feathery side-tilted hat she still wears forty-seven years afterward—oh beautiful longevity, dear Queen Mum! George VI was in a cutaway and striped pants.

They had motored up from the Battery, where they had been welcomed by Governor Herbert H. Lehman and Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia and a twenty-one-gun salute. They were guarded by 13,383 policemen (would that suffice today?). They spent four hours at the World's Fair, which had been much alluded to in our commencement speeches, with the Trylon and Perisphere hailed as symbols of peace and progress—three months before the invasion of Poland.

I am unable to envision Nicholas Murray Butler doing what the King and Queen next did as weekend guests of the Roosevelts at Hyde Park—eating hot dogs and drinking beer at a picnic. (No picnic for Nick! Besides, *his* Roosevelt was Theodore.) "It was said that the King asked for a second helping of the great American snack."

The Columbia convocation is pictorially preserved in a mural (with a key to the dignitaries) in what is now called Butler Library. I am not in it.

But I did get into the presidential mansion at 60 Morningside Drive, twice. Both times were fiascos.

THE first time was in the fall of 1940, when fellowship holders were invited to tea. As I stood in the reception line I failed to notice what those in front of me were correctly doing. They were moving toward Butler with his red-vested butler standing beside him and passing on to the president the name that each guest was supposed to announce. I brushed past Butler's butler and shook the hand of the grand old gentleman, not giving my name to either. Then, anonymous, possibly to be called gate-crasher (for someone had a list), I went on to the petits fours, which were excellent. It wasn't that I thought the etiquette insufferably devious, recalling the Roman nomenclator who whispered into the ear of a consul. No palace revolutionary I—just thoughtless. My wife Mia had parallel trouble when we went to Berkeley in the autumn of 1945. At a reception I escorted a female first-year student, and she a male, to be introduced to a dean named Stone. Mia gave his name as Strong: "No, no, Stone!" said the dean, with patent annoyance. Mia couldn't comprehend why he was so fussy. " 'Strong' is a much better name than 'Stone,' " she remarked to me. "He should have been glad I called him 'Strong'."

I became an instructor in English (then the bottom full-time rank which, with inflation, is now assistant professor) at Columbia College in 1943, got married at the beginning of 1945. I had last seen the president at the commencement of 1944, a deaf, blind figure in the distance, holding on to the microphone stand. His public speaking was a feat of memory or improvisation as he faced blank space. He had turned eighty-two. He would never resign of his own will. He would have to be pushed out.

For the spring semester of 1945 I added to my full-time teaching a course in 18th-century English literature at Sarah Lawrence, one that Jacques Barzun had just relinquished. I could use the money and the experience—of women students again (I had started as an assistant at Barnard) and progressive education. With their shirttails out, the girls came one at a time to my very small office for a thirty-minute conference, which they insisted on claiming even when—as too often happened—they hadn't done the assignment. Nor could I grade them C, D, or F; I had to compose amateur psychoanalyses instead, which, moreover, they were shown. It was there on a bright April afternoon, as nearby a pupil and teacher worked on Beethoven's 32 Variations in C-minor, that I received a surprising phone call. It was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the social secretary of the Butlers. Could I come to dinner one week from today?

She had phoned our West 105th Street apartment and got Mia, who did not identify herself any more than I had in 1940. Mia passed on the Sarah Lawrence number. Clearly the invitation was for me alone. Now why would a mere instructor (and one caught moonlighting at that) be accorded the privilege of 60 Morningside Drive? I made a leap into the dark: I was still on their books as a bachelor, and they needed a young one to sit beside some dowager.

I mentioned that I was married. That gave pause—oh, did that give pause! The secretary said she would get back to me. It was not very many minutes later that she did. Mrs. Le Comte was *of course* included in the invitation. Kate La Montagne Butler did not have to consult Emily Post to know she was stuck with both of us.

Little did they know what we in turn went through. We had to be clothed. My wife still had a black velvet skirt from her native Prague, but it needed setting off with a white silk blouse with black stripes from Saks Fifth Avenue. I needed a dinner jacket from Brooks Brothers, since the one my father had handed down looked funny. My extra salary from Sarah Lawrence was dwindling. I was determined to make do with the ancient dickey and collar.

It was all a fearful rush since I couldn't cancel the Sarah Lawrence afternoon. With minutes to go we found that the dickey kept detaching from the collar. We hadn't enough safety pins; Mia did the best she could. The taxi got us there late. They were waiting for us, the youngest couple, who ought to have been among the first to arrive. Among a dozen guests I recognized Harry Morgan Ayres, the 16th-century specialist.

(To compare small things with great, our host unavoidably kept the Kaiser waiting at their first meeting at the palace at Wilhelmshöhe in the summer of 1905. The appointment had been put ahead without warning. "For a few minutes there was great scurrying, as I was not dressed for the meeting.")

I was uncertainly dressed. Without ever pinpointing my imagined dowager I spoke animatedly at the oval dining table, too animatedly, with gesticulations. Mia, opposite me, suddenly burst into laughter. The man on her right, an anthropologist who hadn't been saying anything funny (do they ever?), looked at her in bewilderment. She pointed at me. In my exuberance I had, all unknown to myself, come apart—dickey, tie, collar, shirt. It was too funny for words, and my wife, her hand on her mouth, had none.

After the finger bowls—perhaps the last finger bowls in the West—Ayres escorted me to a bathroom and put me together again, somehow. Mia started to follow us; he forbade. Then, when the men headed for the smoking room, she wanted to follow them. Ayres had to direct her to stay with the ladies.

So Mia and all the ladies missed the historic part of the evening, historic in every sense of the word, as President Butler reflected on some sixty-five years of his own and world history, which were intertwined. He had known everybody who was anybody, the movers and shakers, beginning with Gladstone, Bismarck, Cardinal Newman, Pope Leo XIII. He knew all the statesmen and politicians but also Longfellow, Whittier, James Russell Lowell, Mark Twain. Close to such European statesmen as Gustav Stresemann, Thomas Masaryk, Aristide Briand, he helped shape treaties. He was president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and an interventionist in both world wars. He had warned against Hitler throughout the 30's.

He had known all the Presidents since Rutherford B. Hayes and most of the 20th-century Prime Ministers of Britain. The only President who was a stranger was the one who had just assumed office with Roosevelt's death two days before. It was Truman's deficiency that he didn't know Butler. Our host wondered out loud what sort of President he would make, Truman the upstart, the haberdasher from Kansas City. (Years later I would hear ex-President Truman deliver a lecture on government at Columbia that I believe even an inveterate Republican would have liked.)

From Truman he went on to Warren G. Harding and repeated the story from *Across the Busy Years* of being summoned to the White House for a revelation that never came, this just before that President took the trip to Alaska that mysteriously killed him. To quote the book: "Evidently there was something very much on his mind and he was trying to bring himself to tell me what it was. Several times during the morning, afternoon, and evening he seemed to be on the point of unbosoming himself, but he never did so."

In an ordinary situation of conversation, where frivolity was permitted and apropos of the theory that Harding was deliberately poisoned, I might have cited the maid Bridget in the Lizzie Borden murder case, who in 1943, stricken with pneumonia, said she had a secret to tell her best friend, but by the time that friend had made her way to her bedside Bridget had recovered and changed her mind.

Of course none of us tried to say anything to Butler—who would have had great trouble hearing anyway—except to prompt him, who needed little prompting. The monologist was about to pass from the Columbia scene that he personally had totally changed. In two and a half years, at eighty-five, he would depart the earthly scene. Only a fool would fault the egotistical sublime of beginning a sentence, "As I said to Prince Bismarck."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Irwin Edman complained of *Across the Busy Years*, "Didn't he ever meet anybody who wasn't famous? A bellboy, for instance." As for me, I don't mind pomp, when it has substance. A personage in a lofty position should look and act the part: that's just another definition of being fit for it. To be sure, Butler was no writer. He never even tried for the wit and grace of an Edman, for example. Look at the first two sentences of *Across the Busy Years*:

> One who has had and is having the inestimable pleasure and satisfaction of a busy, an interesting, and a happy life, and who has enjoyed and is enjoying worldwide contacts and associations of the greatest possible charm and importance, may easily overestimate the value to others of even an imperfect record of those things which he has seen and heard. On the other hand, there is no more interesting branch of literature than biography, with its record, often ingenuous and vain, of the interplay of heredity and environment, of natural capacity and opportunity, with their resulting activities and achievements in the field of reflective thought or in letters or in science or in public service, whether official or unofficial.

The second sentence might be a translation from the German, the language of the author's postdoctoral study (at the University of Berlin). It could be late 19th-century institutional prose. It is inexcusable for 1939. Edman helped John Dewey write less cumbersomely. Some similar angel of the light should have been at Butler's side. Fame is fleeting, especially if the prose is slow. At my local public library in Lenox, Massachusetts the last time *Across the Busy Years* was taken out was 1941. Butler keeps his distance, as he did in life. He never even tells when he was born. "My mother's memory is too sacred to be made the subject of record." If the reader is to be treated as an impertinent intruder, why write at all?

BUTLER was a snob who was sometimes accused of anti-Semitism. For an individual so far from coarse, the attitude, if it existed, would not be easily detected. Without even mentioning the accusation, Diana Trilling rebutted it in "Lionel Trilling, A Jew at Columbia" (COMMENTARY, March 1979). It turns out that six years before I and my Jewish refugee wife were the somewhat baffled guests in the president's footmanned dining room, the Trillings were invited for a reason that fulfilled a fantasy Diana had had. The fantasy was that President Butler read and liked Lionel's dissertation on Matthew Arnold—was not Butler himself a 19th-century figure?—and arranged for Lionel's promotion to assistant professor. And that was exactly what happened. Moreover, when the male guests repaired to the library for cigars and brandy Butler told a story for the particular benefit of the chairman of the English department, Ernest Hunter Wright. It concerned a proposed exchange of philosophy professors between the Universities of Berlin and Columbia that had the Berlin Chancellor objecting to receiving Felix Adler:

> Lionel recreated the scene. Having got this far in his narrative, Butler had put down his brandy glass and firmly planted his hands on his knees, fixing his eyes on Professor Wright as he boomed: "And I, gentlemen, I wrote back: 'At Columbia, sir, we recognize merit, not race.' " Silence.

The Felix Adler story, like most of Butler's stories, was thirty years old, but nonetheless pointed for 1939. The next year he was to proclaim that Columbia should and would enter the war "between beasts and human beings."

Jews who were not promoted or who were let go sometimes focused their suspicions on Butler when, I suspect, the trouble lay closer to home with departmental chairmen or colleagues. In the department of Greek and Latin, for instance, when all the elderly professors retired at about the same time, that fine and learned teacher, Moses Hadas, should have succeeded to a full professorship. Instead, a Scot who had been to Oxford and a German from Munich received appointments. Apart from the department of philosophy, in which Butler took a personal interest (full professor Edman looked like a boy and comparatively was), promotion was notoriously slow at Columbia in the 1935-45 period (as it was, also, in the English department at Berkeley in the 1930's). Meyer Schapiro was held back, but so were Jacques Barzun and Mark Van Doren and Ruth Benedict. Marjorie Nicolson was the first woman to be a full professor (1941): they could accord her no less, since she had been a dean at Smith. When I entered Columbia College in 1935 the English department had only one full professor, the departmental representative, Harrison Ross Steeves. It was shocking that Van Doren had not been given that rank (an unfairness so painful Van Doren does not mention it in his autobiography). I heard from a later chairman that Wright took some thirty of Van Doren's books into Butler's office and laid them out on the desk.

Diana Trilling's memoir, exempting Butler, points a finger at some of Lionel Trilling's colleagues, such as Emery Neff, who "came to say . . . that now that Lionel was a member of the department, he hoped that he would not use it as a wedge to open the English department to more Jews." She mentions Raymond Weaver as "outspokenly hostile until a long time afterward when his enmity changed into affection as precipitously as it had appeared." I don't know what date Mrs. Trilling would give for the change. Once I asked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my brilliant friend and colleague Andrew Chiappe why Weaver perfumed himself so much. (I should add that there were more whispers in those days about homosexuality in the department than about anti-Semitism.) Weaver had volunteered an explanation to Andrew: he did it in self-defense because "Trilling's office smells like a delicatessen." Weaver must have taken leave of one of his senses, at least, to say something so wide of the mark about the very epitome of elegance and fastidiousness.

Credit *Across the Busy Years* for observing: "The Eighteenth Amendment was the result of one of those mad outbursts of emotion and passion which from time to time sweep over the American people. The Ku Klux Klan movement with its hatred and persecution of Roman Catholics and the anti-Semitic movement are two other outstanding demonstrations of this type of feeling." Butler's wife was Roman Catholic (he, of course, was Episcopalian) and Benjamin Nathan Cardozo was a friend whom he recommended to President Coolidge for the United States Supreme Court as "an absolutely ideal judge." (Coolidge replied that "he could not appoint Cardozo despite his merits because there was already one Jew upon the Court [Brandeis] and the appointment of another would excite criticism.") The 865 pages of the memoirs include two Jewish jokes that are not worth repeating and two references that place the author in the role of reporter (which he once was): In 1927 Kerensky "stated that the influence of the Jewish element in the Soviet government had largely declined with the passing from power of Trotsky and Zinoviev." In 1912 the Kaiser held forth on why the *Titanic* sank and why Germany would never compete in that area:

> He was most emphatic in denouncing the bad navigation of the ship, which he ascribed to Ismay's [managing director of the White Star Line, who was among those rescued] control over Captain Smith and the former's determination to make a good record for the maiden trip. He denounced Ismay as a coward and as a Greek Jew from whom nothing better could be expected. . . . He said that ships were big enough and fast enough then and there was no object to be gained in driving them faster to save a few hours' time for greedy Jewish passengers on business bent.

Butler's only comment is: "During this whole talk the Kaiser was at his best. He was not only vivacious, but brilliant and animated in high degree." No doubt. If that was the Kaiser at his best, a good many of us would rather listen to him chop wood in Doorn.

I think the human problem with Butler was insulation, or elevation, from ordinary mortal struggle. He remarks of a ship that took him from Alexandria to Jaffa:

> That ship is of evil memory, particularly because of its discomforts and especially because of its filth. It was a Russian vessel called the *Korniloff*, crowded with Russians of every sort and kind on their way to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Greek Easter festival. A few years later I read, with entire resignation, that this vessel had been wrecked and ruined in a storm off the coast of Crete.

The mayor of Vienna, who had been hospitable to him, gets a fleeting sigh: "When the government of Austria fell [in 1938], Burgomeister [*sic*] Seitz was ejected from office and I fear did not have a happy time thereafter." Well, the man did survive Hitler after all, not that Butler knew it at the time. Silence on the Kaiser's clichés; litotes on Seitz; jocosity over a wrecked Russian ship filled with filthy people. No wonder no one warmed to the autocrat of Morningside Drive—whose last gesture was to approve the charmer, Ike Eisenhower.

LEAVING its readers with the impression that Butler seized any and all occasions to flee his wife and go speechifying (had she bullied him into that dedication?), *Columbia* next undertook, in a later issue, to raise our estimate of his successor.* The logic is that, since in the last two decades Eisenhower has been reevaluated more favorably by historians as President of the United States, isn't it time to modify the common view of him as a disaster at Columbia?

The interregnum between Butler and Eisenhower, 1945-48, was exactly the time I was away teaching at Berkeley. Thus I was spared the faculty anxiety and agitations as the astonishing appointment drew near to reality. One almost didn't need to be informed of the reaction; it was predictable. A general (some said, not a very good general at that) as president of Columbia? One whose so-called education occurred at West Point? What was his class ranking? Yes, just as expected. At least substitute MacArthur, first in his class, with that undeniably keen mind and gift for oratory. How nostalgic they suddenly were for old Miraculous. He may have been autocratic or senile, but he lived the intellectual life. Eisenhower—a bad joke. That idiot trustee, Thomas J. Watson of IBM (what academic ever admired a businessman?), must have misunderstood and approached the wrong Eisenhower. Wasn't he supposed to set up an appointment with Eisenhower's brother, Milton, then president of Kansas State College? As for Dwight, his "ear-to-ear grin was a natural to draw funds," asserted *Newsweek*, funds sorely needed, but his acceptance was viewed by the disgruntled and unconsulted faculty as crass opportunism. He was using Columbia as the next

* "Eisenhower's First Presidency," by Lewis Galambos, Daun van Ee, Elizabeth S. Hughes, February 1985.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

step up. The public was to think he had brains. Butler never said no to the 1920 Republican convention, and his predecessor, Seth Low, resigned in 1901 to become mayor, but both had bettered the university with years and years of distinguished service. Butler's voice was heard from beyond the grave in a letter he wrote to President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904: "Nothing injures a University so much as to give the University itself and the public reason to believe that the President looks upon his position as a stepping-stone to political office."

Yet in fact, Professor Eli Ginzberg of Columbia, who is also interviewed in the February 1985 issue of *Columbia*, along with Professor Henry Graff, exonerates Ike of such strategy: it "could never have been more than an outside gambit, since almost everybody expected Dewey to win in 1948 and run again in 1952. The first opportunity for Eisenhower would have been in 1956, when he would be pushing seventy—in that era, an unsuitable age for a first-time presidential candidate."

The *Columbia* article, an apology of sorts, admits what has to be admitted:

> Eisenhower began his Columbia career with some obvious handicaps. He had spent his entire adult life in the U.S. Army and had never taken any particular interest in either the modern academic disciplines or the complex intellectual community in New York City, whereas his distinguished predecessor at Columbia, Nicholas Murray Butler, had published some nineteen books and had enjoyed close ties with many of the faculty. Butler had been in harmony with the city's intellectual currents in a way that Eisenhower would never be.
>
> The general was concerned: "Mamie and I have had great difficulty in believing that I possess any particular qualifications for the distinguished position to which the Trustees have appointed me."

So he was modest. Indeed, I once remarked to Irwin Edman, who had become my friend, that our university president was "too modest." "He couldn't be!" came the lightning retort.

Ike was modest when I had dinner with him. Again it was a special set of circumstances that got me into the exalted company. I returned to Columbia in the fall of 1948 as an assistant professor of English. All faculty newcomers were invited to a gala dinner in a great hall on campus. Eisenhower was a newcomer, too, sitting, of course, at the head table. Typically no evening dress was required. Before our entry, Mia and I freshened up at the nearby apartment of F. W. Dupee, the critic, who was returning to Columbia from Bard, a place that I once thought of attending (that small-college-versus-large issue) until someone spelled it backward. Fred kept close to us for company; his wife was too pregnant to be present. Mamie Eisenhower wasn't there, either.

A professor of history made a short boring speech of welcome, which he read. Then Ike rose and spoke off the cuff. "I feel like the batboy coming up after Lou Gehrig," he began. He probably was not being ironical. That is all I recall of either speech, but it suffices to fix Ike for me as the great tactician—in the sense of master of tact—with his apt allusion to Columbia's greatest athlete for the purpose of disarming an audience that doubted his credentials. "I have no pretensions, but wait and see—give me the chance to make good"—that was the coded message.

ALTHOUGH Eisenhower was our president until December 1950, when he took leave to be commander of NATO, I never saw him again. I should have seen him, at the faculty meetings over which it was his duty to preside. He never turned up. There was always some excuse, the usual one being that he was called to Washington. Some sneered that he was probably on a golf course. There was a rumor about what he had done to 60 Morningside: taken out the library and put in a pool table. In fact he used the top floor for his new hobby of painting.

Mia dutifully went to one faculty wives' university tea. There she stared at a woman holding over her stomach a bouquet of violets. "Who is that? My mother wouldn't have had her as a maid," exclaimed my wife all too loudly. It was Mamie Eisenhower.

I was in perpetual danger of seeing Eisenhower in one of my classes in Hamilton Hall. He had become close to Dean Harry Carman of Columbia College; they took to dropping in without warning to check—what would it be called?—"the educational process" at first hand, sitting "unobtrusively" ("Don't mind us," ha, ha) in back. I had tried (in vain) to teach composition to General MacArthur's son, Arthur, who was chauffeured up from the Waldorf-Astoria in a limousine, but this was a different kettle of fish. I would be torn, if faced with it, between refusing to be intimidated or copying a colleague, who immediately announced a written test. But my nerve was never tested.

Henry Graff, professor of American history, relates the outcome that many had bitterly foreseen:

> When [Eisenhower] started to run for the Presidency, he and Taft, who lost the nomination to him, kissed and made up with each other at a meeting held in 60 Morningside Drive. Later, using 60 Morningside as a launching pad, Eisenhower started off on a campaign trip, with all the pols and all the sirens going. One of my witty colleagues remarked, "You know, Butler did a lot of things wrong, living like a medieval baron, but he never stained the place with politics."

Memories are short; I'm not sure that that conclusion is true; but it has a Platonic validity.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT remains is to mention the sequel, the Battle of the Ads. During the campaign the faculty was, as Graff puts it, "very hot for Stevenson." When the one-sided results were in, Mark Van Doren went so far as to say, "I felt as if God had gone to sleep." I myself thought the enthusiasm for Stevenson misplaced. I declared he should be president of Columbia. He was too vacillating (as Truman also thought) for the other position. I found it in deplorable taste when there appeared in the New York *Times* a full-page ad for Stevenson signed by nearly all the leading Columbia lights. They were stating, in effect, "We who have experienced Eisenhower as president are against him 99 to 1." That was to mix up two utterly different positions. So, when I was approached by Harry Carman to sign a counter-ad, I did, despite dire warnings from my wife that my career at Columbia—and anywhere else—would be forever blighted. The next time Lionel Trilling saw me he hissed. "Republican!" Dupee, with whom I shared an office, grunted, "Me like Ike, eh?" Irwin Edman was disillusioned with his once-promising protégé. When I told a story about trying to phone the Liberal Arts Press and getting the wrong number, the man at the other end saying, "We're not liberal anything," Irwin stabbed, "That must have made *you* happy."

It was contended that our ad, labeled "Faculty and Staff," consisted almost entirely of typists and maintenance workers—university plumbers, carpenters, elevator operators, gardeners, and the like.

And that was true.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Settlers

A Story

Edith Pearlman

ONE Sunday morning at eight o'clock Peter Loy stood on the corner of Congdon Street and Brighton Avenue, waiting for the bus downtown. It was October, and the wind was strong enough to ruffle the curbside litter and to make Peter's coat flap about his knees, open and closed, open and closed. He wouldn't have been sorry if the wind had removed the coat altogether, like a disapproving valet. It had been a mistake, this long glen-plaid garment with a capelet, suitable for some theatrical undergraduate, not for an ex-schoolteacher of sixty-odd years. He had thought that with his height and thinness and longish hair he'd look like Sherlock Holmes when wearing it. Instead, he looked like a dowager.

It didn't matter; this was not a neighborhood that could afford to frown on oddities. Congdon Street was home to an assortment of students, foreigners, and old people. A young couple with matching briefcases had recently bought one of the peeling houses in the hope that the street would turn chic; they spent all their free time gamely stripping paint from the interiors. On weekday mornings white-haired women in bathrobes stared from apartment windows while their middle-aged daughters straggled off to work, and then kept on staring. The immobility of the stay-at-home mothers suggested that their daughters had locked them in; but often at noontime Peter would see one of them moving toward the corner. Her steps lightened as she neared Brighton Avenue. Here was life! Fresh fish, fish 'n chips, Fishberg the optician. Also on Congdon Street was a three-story frame building with huge pillars and sagging porches—a vaguely Southern edifice. Inside lived an entire village of Cambodians.

Peter had moved to this seedy section of Boston three years before, upon his retirement from the private boys' academy where he'd taught English. His plain apartment here pleased him far more than his aunt's town house in Back Bay. He had dragged out several decades in that town house, first as his aunt's pampered guest and then as her legatee. He had sold it for a good price to the young self-made millionaire next door, Geronimus Barron. No one had hurried Peter out after the sale, though he was eager enough to leave; but within a month of his departure Barron had knocked down the wall between the houses, gutted entire floors, and installed solar panels and skylights. The magnificent place that resulted was featured in *Architectural Digest* and the New York *Times*. The lovely tiled fireplace in his own bedroom, Peter noted with pride, remained untouched.

The bus came. The few passengers aboard already looked fatigued. Peter, his own heart light under his silly coat, began the weekly journey.

"How's the research?" Meg Wren was asking, a few hours later.

Jack and the three children were playing with a soccer ball in the field in back of the house. The field sloped gently toward the woods. A mile away was the Sudbury River. Peter couldn't see the river now, from the kitchen, but he could glimpse it from the third-floor guest room where he stayed whenever he spent the night.

"I'm having trouble placing Mrs. Jellyby," Peter said.

"Mrs. Jellyby?" Meg repeated, wrinkling her long brow.

Peter waited. Her gaze was intelligent; but he was not sure exactly how well read she was. She had been born and raised in Nebraska, and had come East after college, almost fifteen years before, and had quickly married one of his former students. "*Bleak House*?" she said.

"*Bleak House*," Peter commended. "Mrs. Jellyby is the crackpot who spends all her time collecting money for the natives of Borioboola-Gha. Her own ragged children keep tumbling down the stairs. Their house is filthy and falling apart. 'Never have a mission,' her poor husband warns the heroine. These days we would applaud Mrs. Jellyby's selflessness. We'd be glad to know that she cares about Africa—funny how some things never seem to change."

" 'For ye have the poor always with you'?"

"Yes; and they're always the same poor. Mrs. Jellyby carries her ardor to excess, and neglects

EDITH PEARLMAN, a new contributor, has published stories in a number of literary journals, including *Ascent*, the *Massachusetts Review*, and the *New England Review*. Her work has appeared in two O. Henry Prize Collections.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the need nearest her. Not a very Christian form of charity."

Peter paused. He had been lecturing to Meg, taking advantage of her daughterly attention. In years spent among self-important high-school teachers and garrulous old ladies he had accustomed himself to the listener's role. Now he had found someone who listened as attentively as he did. It was as if she had inherited the talent from him—or, since that was impossible, had caught it. And this house of hers—so old, and so fresh—it too seemed to want to hear what he had to say. "Mrs. Jellyby's philanthropy isn't very Jewish, either," he went on. "You could make a case that her charity is in Maimonides's seventh degree—she doesn't know the names of the people she's relieving and they've certainly never heard of her. But Dickens meant her to be a figure of fun, and he keeps arguing with me. He says that Maimonides was talking about charity closer to home, and that Mrs. Jellyby doesn't qualify at all. . . . I do get a bit carried away, don't I?"

Meg was silent. Of all the silences he had ever experienced, Meg's was his favorite. It was not disappointed, like his mother's; not bored, like those of the women he had courted; not embarrassed, like that of the Search Committee which had failed to award him the headmastership; not sleepy, like students in late afternoon remedial classes; and not terrifying, like his mute aunt after her stroke.

"I think you're enjoying this task," she said after a while.

"Carrot scraping?" he smiled. He had been scraping carrots for her while they—he—talked.

"Thinking about Dickens and Maimonides," she said. "Finding Maimonides's eight levels of charity in the novels of Dickens," she carefully amended. "It does sound . . . nice. I knew you were interested in Dickens. But I didn't know you were interested in Judaism."

"I'm not interested in Judaism. Only in Jews. They're so complicated. . . ."

"Yes."

". . . always have been." At Harvard just after the war he had noticed that his brightest classmates were the Jewish boys. They were at home with Swift's grotesques and Jane Austen's ingenues. Mastering Middle English was a snap after Hebrew. Shakespeare's tales were just another set of *midrashim*. Every exchange with one of those students had left Peter admiring and envious. He wondered what encounters Meg had thus far endured—dinner-party *pilpul*? Lordly attempts at seduction? . . . And here was her husband, open-faced, steady as the junior-high-school principal he was. He walked in grinning, his arm outstretched.

The three children bounded in behind Jack: two boys and a little girl. The younger boy's hair matched the pumpkin on the windowsill. Meg said that his coloring came from her side of the family, though her own smooth hair was brown. The children greeted Peter lightly, as if a week had not gone by since they last saw him; as if he hadn't spent over an hour on bus, trolley, and little train; as if he lived there always. Someday he must really live there, Meg had said more than once. The third-floor room was just the place to retire from his retirement.

After lunch the three adults drank hot cider under an apple tree and talked about the children.

"They're lazy," said Jack. "I tried to teach Ned chess the other day. Too difficult, he said. Checkers is good enough for him."

Meg said, "It's good enough for a lot of people."

"Oh, Meg. We send them to private schools. We shore up this old house for them." He wasn't complaining, Peter noticed; he was proud.

"You spend two hours a day commuting," Meg added.

"I do. So they've got to," said Jack.

"Got to what?" she laughed.

"Play chess." And he laughed, too. "What do you think, Peter?"

"What do I think about what?" Peter hedged.

"About our three hooligans. About the worth of private education. About the country life." Jack breathed deeply. Generations of farmers and ministers expressed themselves in that pleased inhalation. The house had always been in his family; some ancestor had built it. A century ago he would have farmed the land with his sons and a few hired hands. They would have made a genteel go of it. The boys would have gone to Harvard as a matter of course. Now he had to weary himself every day at a profession he was unfit for, and his children would have to compete for college places against the grandchildren of longshoremen and Pullman porters. To strengthen them for the fight, Meg drove them to their Cambridge school every morning and home again in the late afternoon. In the interval she worked as a programmer, also in Cambridge.

Peter said, "I think the house is its own reward."

The stone wall in the garden was mauve under the afternoon sun. The kitchen windows gleamed like water. Roses bloomed with a soft fire—there would be one or two still glowing as late as Thanksgiving, Peter remembered—and zinnias and asters flourished along the path to the door. It was a house to come home to. That the young Wrens were inside watching television seemed not hopeless, just sad. Meg's modesty and Jack's busyness perhaps did not perfectly serve their offspring.

"Children tend toward the mean," Peter suggested.

"The mean and nasty," said Jack. But Meg

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

said doubtfully, "The mean between Jack and me?"

"The mean of their own generation," said Peter, smiling.

"Is that unavoidable?" she said, not smiling.

He didn't like to drive, didn't own a car, but if he lived here he could drive the kids to school and back, and Meg could work at home. She was a valued programmer; her company would allow her that privilege; these days any arrangement was possible. And eventually his aunt's legacy, unexhausted, would go to the children.

IN THE mornings the young of Congdon Street went off to school, the bigger ones shepherding the smaller. Even the smallest had pilgrim backpacks. Some mothers walked along behind, not interfering, just watchful. Peter wondered if the women took turns as monitors. The daytime danger was from traffic. Peter too kept an eye on the children from his window. Sometimes, out early to buy the paper, he found himself in their midst; a little crowd of small Asians and Central Americans would divide briefly for his sake and then reunite behind him. He felt like a maypole. The children wore every shade of corduroy. How were they faring in the Land of Opportunity? he wondered. The manager of the Cambodian building, N. Gordon, was being brought to court because of his failure to maintain the building properly. The failure was not his fault, his lawyer had countered; the place was overcrowded; these people kept sub-renting to one another.

Peter went out every day. He now recognized some of the slow-moving white-haired women, and smiled at them. He used the main library downtown. He read a book about Dickens and Sabbatarians and another about Dickens and Jews. Sometimes he met a colleague or a former student for lunch. He went to afternoon movies, and sat in the back row with his long legs on the seat in front of him. He went to friends' houses for dinner, or fixed himself healthful meals at home.

THE Wrens gave an annual afternoon party on the Sunday after the Game. Meg did the work herself, with some assistance from the family and from Peter. She baked cheddar cheese puffs. She twisted salami into flutes, and arranged crudités around a bowl of yogurt. Peter remembered his aunt's cook's zealously constructed trifles, each layer less edible than the one before. Meg's canapés were at least tasty.

That morning Peter stood at the kitchen counter, spreading fish paste onto little squares of pumpernickel and admiring the view from the window. A stand of spruces made him think of Christmas. Beside him, Meg sliced cucumbers. They were both wearing jeans; both had a birch-tree litheness; he might have been her older brother.

The crowd at the party was, as always, varied—local gentry, old friends, co-workers; a pair of ancient cousins of Jack's. Also there was a group of parents from the children's school, including two notables, both Jews: a psychologist who was also a TV commentator, and Geronimus Barron, Peter's former neighbor. Their wives were not particularly attractive, just assured. A generation ago, Peter reflected, Jewish wives had been well dressed and cultivated and full of leisure. Now they were all practicing medicine. You couldn't keep up with people like that.

He was popular at this party. People remembered him from year to year. A friend of Meg's whose husband was leaving her had once wept on his shoulder in the pantry. That couple seemed to have reconciled, he noticed. The Wrens' dentist fancied himself a devotee of Dickens, although Peter was under the impression that he had read only *Oliver Twist*. Jack's cousins made much of him. "We'd like to talk to you more often than once in a blue moon."

" . . . would be lovely," he said.

"We'll have to get Peggy to arrange it."

Peggy? ". . . happy families are *not* alike," someone was saying.

" . . . more to be pitied then censored. She snoops to conquer." Who was that punster? Oh, the TV psychologist. . . . And somehow Geronimus Barron was at his side. How long had he been standing there?

"It's nice to see you again, Mr. Loy."

"Peter," Peter corrected. "I didn't hear you come up, Geronimus. You were as quiet as a tiger."

"Is that what a corporate takeover feels like?" asked one of the cousins.

"I don't know," said Geronimus Barron. He had a habit of answering as precisely as possible whatever question had been posed. This gave him an obedient air. "I don't want to take you over, Mr. Loy, Peter, but I wish you were part of my staff. Margaret says that you're the last of the lucid thinkers."

Margaret? Geronimus, hands in pockets, smiled a courteous refusal to the teen-ager passing a tray of wine. The cousins, as if to make amends for so abstemious a guest, took two glasses each. How old was this quiet tycoon, Peter wondered. Forty? You could put him naked and empty-handed on a desert island, and in five years he'd be chief minister to the native king. Maimonides had risen to court physician in record time. . . . "What else does Margaret say?"

"Peggy never talks much," said one cousin.

"Still waters run deep," said the other.

"She and I serve together on the Scholarship Committee," said Geronimus, and the talk turned to minority recruitment. Peter had received the latest bulletin from the boarding school he himself had attended. The school had recently invited two South Bronx boys to study there; and two unhappier faces had never before been im-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mortalized on high-quality vellum. Entrapment, Peter called it. Geronimus listened.

THE next morning Meg said that she would drop the children at school before leaving Peter at Harvard Square. Peter was pleased to be part of this family ritual. A curved line of automobiles humped forward slowly. Only one car at a time was allowed to disburden itself. The students getting out of the cars had the ragamuffin look of the rich. Meg wore a ski sweater and did not look rich, just wholesome. "Think of Jack's long drive every day," she was saying as they left the school grounds. "It's no wonder he can't finish his doctorate—he spends all his time on the highway. Sometimes I think we should do a splurge and invest in a chauffeur. It would give Jack two more hours a day to work on his thesis. He could sit in the back seat with an Olivetti or a tape recorder. Is that mad?"

"On the contrary. It's innovative. It's the sort of solution Geronimus Barron would think up."

"Is it? Jack won't hear of it."

"Give him time." He glanced at her worried profile. "Jack is flexible," he said. But that was a lie. Jack was rigid. He, Peter, was the flexible one. His was a flexibility achieved late in life, after unhappiness and disappointment, and he was proud of it. Postponed achievements were perhaps the best. Maimonides had not married until late middle age, and had even sired a son. . . . Meg turned toward him with a warm, even a marital smile. "I wish I could take you all the way to your apartment, but I have an early conference."

"I have to go to Widener," he lied again.

She pulled up near one of the Yard gates. Peter opened the door.

"My dear," he said.

"*My* dear," she said, charmingly. She waited for him to get out and slam the door. Then she drove away.

ONE night in December there was a fire in the Cambodian building. Some woman had created a makeshift barbecue on her kitchen floor because the stove no longer worked or the gas had been shut off. Not much damage resulted, and nobody was forced to relocate, but for an hour all of the building's inhabitants stood in the street like the little band of refugees they were. When the firemen announced that it was safe to reenter the building, they filed in. Peter, watching from his window, would have liked to invite some of them for a cup of tea; but which ones? He wished Meg were beside him in her quilted robe.

IT WAS the Friday night before Christmas. Weak electric candles burned in some windows, and the hopeful young couple had installed a tree in their living room, but they were in Stowe and the tree's lights were out. The rest of the street was unfestive. Peter's apartment, the exception, was glowing—he loved Friday nights; even though he no longer had a job he still felt an end-of-the-week release—but the shivering presence of Jack Wren was robbing his place of warmth. The man had stayed late at school to make sure everything was in order before vacation, like a proper principal, and then he had driven straight into Boston with all the Friday night traffic, straight to Peter. He had arrived at seven o'clock. It was now after eight. Peter kept idiotically offering him food. Jack kept refusing. He would go home soon, he kept saying. He and Meg had not separated yet. They had not told the children. They were still man and wife. Meg was expecting him. "It's unbelievable," he said.

Not to mention unseemly, Peter thought. Also untrustworthy. And what was Geronimus Barron planning to do about his own wife? But he knew the answer to that question. Mrs. Barron—properly Dr. Barron—was a distinguished immunologist; plenty of scientists were no doubt eager to keep her company. Geronimus too seemed to like her. Theirs had been a good marriage, Peter realized. They would part as friends.

But what about the Wren children? he asked himself, rattled. How would they fare on the inevitable vacation when they were forced to share a villa or a yacht—or, more likely, a tent and a latrine—with the overachieving Barron kids? Well, maybe the Barron children too tended toward the mean. Jews were subject to the same genetic laws as everybody else, Peter reasoned. Jews were. . . .

Jack said, "They take our jobs, our money, our positions at schools. They take over our towns. Now they are taking our women."

"Not our houses," Peter murmured. "Not all our houses."

"Meg never liked our house."

"No, Jack. Maybe that's what she says now, but. . . ."

"She always said it." Jack pressed his nose against the window like one of his sons. "She would have preferred to live in some split level in the boonies and send the kids to public school. Now I wish we'd done that. She wouldn't have met any Geronimus Barron at the Nothingsville PTA."

Peter had to agree. Which proved, he supposed, that Margaret and Geronimus had been destined for each other. She had once told him that she wasn't meant to be gentry; that she wasn't aristocratic, just simple; and that, despite her ease with computers, she wasn't particularly bright. Nor was she ambitious. They had been alone under the apple tree with her sleeping daughter. When he had opened his mouth to argue with this unex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pected and certainly inaccurate disclosure, she had put her finger over his lips. "Just an ordinary prairie girl," she had whispered. He remembered the blinding beauty of her pale freckled face and her blue eyes; and he understood that what she felt for Geronimus was a prairie love, irresistible as the wind.

He moved to Jack's side and put an arm around the younger man. In the supportive embrace, Jack held himself straighter.

"You'll never get over her," said Peter, "but the rage will ease, and the sorrow."

"Yes," said Jack. Peter wondered without much interest who would marry Jack. Some nice woman. She would appreciate the house but would not realize that its furnishings included a retired teacher with a bee in his bonnet about Dickens and Maimonides. Peter would be invited to visit perhaps once a year. As for Geronimus and Meg, they would live in a penthouse overlooking the redeveloped harbor. A caterer would take charge of their hors d'oeuvres. He hoped they would put him on their party list.

Along the sidewalk below hurried a large man and a tarty-looking woman. On the other side of the street two young men walked, arguing. Though they had left their bookbags at home, their beards and their parkas identified them as law students. They would be gone after commencement, Peter predicted; they would decamp for Charlestown or the South End. The hopeful young couple with briefcases, discovering themselves pregnant, would sell their folly and flee to a western suburb. The students' places, the couple's house, would be taken by other people. Homes allowed themselves to be commandeered by whoever came along. Not like cats; cats remain aloof. Not like dogs; dogs remain loyal. Like women, he made himself think, willing misogyny to invade him, to settle in, so that in another few years everybody would assume he had been in its possession forever.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Judge & the Schools

COMMON GROUND: A TURBULENT DECADE IN THE LIVES OF THREE AMERICAN FAMILIES. By J. ANTHONY LUKAS. *Knopf. 659 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES Q. WILSON

BY NOW, everyone must know that J. Anthony Lukas has written a fascinating book about three families and various public figures who are caught up in the turmoil surrounding the effort to integrate the Boston public schools. The words on the dust jacket have been picked up and repeated by most of the review media, and I think they are by and large correct—a "brilliant tapestry" conveying a "deep sympathy for the people involved" and supplying a "powerful account" of the "realities of day-to-day living" in a city wracked by controversy and violence.

The families are those of Colin Diver, a Yankee graduate of Harvard Law School; Rachel Twymon, a black woman with six children living on welfare; and Alice McGoff, an Irish widow living with her children in Charlestown. The public figures are former mayor Kevin White, former School Committee chairman Louise Day Hicks, Boston *Globe* editor Thomas Winship, Cardinal Medeiros, and federal judge W. Arthur Garrity.

Though everyone's story is interesting, the most informative ones are not those about the three families but those about the legal, media, and governmental institutions of Boston. The account of the power struggle and political cleavages within the *Globe* sheds new light on the role of one of the most powerful political forces in New England; the chapters on Kevin White are a revealing portrait of a man caught up in the need to pacify a city while pursuing his ambitions for higher office. But the key figure is Judge Garrity, and about him we learn the least.

Judge Garrity's orders set in motion one of the most massive, and bitterly resisted, school-integration plans ever attempted in a Northern city. No one has learned more about the history of this period than Lukas, but he is at pains not to judge what resulted, nor does he judge the people who shaped the outcome or were changed by it. In fact, the book is written in such a way as to make it almost impossible for the reader to reach any conclusions, either. The book does not proceed chronologically, but by means of a series of snapshots of the families and officials at various times. The story of public schooling and its integration is not told in any single place, but is woven into the tapestry like a thread, and not even a brightly colored, easy-to-follow one at that. If you do not already know the convoluted history of the Racial Imbalance Act, the federal court orders and plans, the neighborhood response, the legal and political appeals, you will find the book's structure puzzling and confusing. If you wish to extract that history from the book (most of the bits and pieces are there, scattered through its twenty-nine chapters), you will find it hard going because the book has no index.

School integration is the frame, but Boston is the picture. Lukas is fascinated by the city and its many cultures. He tells us about how the Irish and the Yankees began their political wars, how people live in some of the ethnic neighborhoods of a city that is virtually defined by the idea of ethnicity and neighborhood, and how newspapers, business leaders, and city hall struggle with one another. If you do not know contemporary Boston, this is a splendid introduction to all parts save the new Yuppie precincts of Quincy Market and Newbury Street and the student culture of the universities.

One can both admire and be irritated by Lukas's steadfast refusal to tell us what school integration did or did not achieve. Almost everybody involved in this struggle has his story told sympathetically; there are very few stereotypes; careful distinctions are made among persons often lumped together ("the press," "city hall"). But Lukas's resolute refusal to judge—save here and there, by slips of the pen—makes us wonder who can ever hope to judge, since it is unlikely anyone will ever again interview as many people and read as many documents as did Lukas.

And even if no judgment were made, it would be helpful to have an account rendered. What happened to the Boston schools? How many were integrated, and how many of those were resegregated as whites left the city or its schools? Did the schools get better or worse? Did racial attitudes improve or worsen? Is Boston a less racist city after the judge's intervention than before? Was all the turmoil worth it?

Bostonians feel strongly about these matters. Many people who will readily agree that the Boston school authorities were actively aiding and abetting segregation nevertheless believe that Judge Garrity very nearly destroyed the Boston public schools as a consequence of an insensitive, heavy-handed, overly intrusive desegregation plan. There can be little doubt that something had to be done; the practices of the school authorities in the early 1960's simply did not measure up to even the loosest interpretation of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. But were there better ways to eliminate segregation than the one chosen by Judge Garrity?

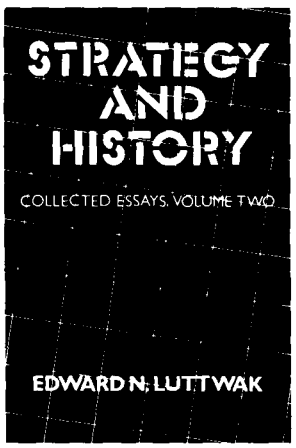
Lukas hints that there were. In 1975, Judge Garrity decided that, in the face of the refusal of the Boston School Committee to submit an acceptable desegregation plan of its own, he would devise

JAMES Q. WILSON *is Shattuck Professor of Government at Harvard and Collins Professor of Management at UCLA. His latest book, written with Richard J. Herrnstein, is* Crime and Human Nature *(Simon & Schuster).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everything You Need To Know About Strategy — Not More, Not Less.

FROM TRANSACTION BOOKS



STRATEGY AND HISTORY

COLLECTED ESSAYS, VOLUME TWO
Edward N. Luttwak

Few people have a sense of political urgency and moral force equal to Edward Luttwak's. *Strategy and History,* the second volume of his collected papers, features mostly new work never before published, as well as some older papers suddenly topical owing to the Reagan strategic defense initiatives. Luttwak's writing on the Soviet Union, arms control, and naval strategy are all infused with a high level of practical wisdom and theoretical acumen.

Three papers on the art of war included in this volume have been widely quoted, circulated, and debated. One is the foundation document of the Military Reform Movement. Another induced a major revision of U.S. Army field manuals. The third restarted the counterinsurgency debate, this time in the context of Central America. With a special psychological sensibility rare in writers on international affairs, Luttwak discusses important and vital events in the context of large-scale theory, but firmly anchored to empirical realities.

Contents: Deterrence, Destruction, and Detente: "From Mutual Assured Destruction to Mutual Assured Security"; "The Problems of Extending Deterrence"; "The Nuclear Alternatives"; "Detente Reconsidered"; "Military Balance and Deus Ex Missiles"; The Uses and Constraints for Naval Power: "The Political Uses of Sea Power: The Theory of Suasion"; "Sea Power in the Mediterranean"; "American Naval Power in the Pacific: The Policy Environment"; "War, Strategy, and Maritime Power"; Styles of Warfare: "The American Style of Warfare"; "The Operational Level of War"; "Low-Intensity Warfare"; "Strategists of the Nuclear Age: Kaplan, Kissinger, and Brzezinski"; "Delusions of Soviet Weakness."

Edward N. Luttwak is research professor and senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University. He is a consultant to the Defense and State Departments on international affairs and national security policy and the author of a number of books and articles on strategic and military affairs, including *Strategy and Politics* and *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union.*

ISBN: 0-88738-065-4 (cloth) **$19.95**
1985 **251 pp.**

Order from your bookstore or prepaid from:

Transaction Books
Dept.LUT

Rutgers -
The State University
New Brunswick, N.J.
08903

STRATEGY & POLITICS

COLLECTED ESSAYS
Edward N. Luttwak

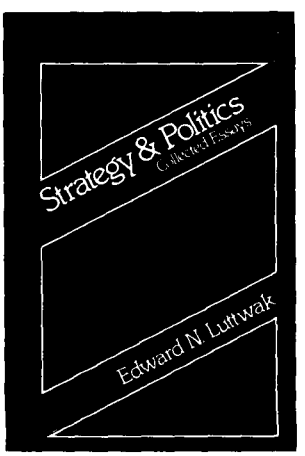
"One of the most brilliant thinkers on strategy and international affairs... at the top of his form."—Henry Kissinger

"The articles have the mark of a professional strategist. With the insight of a Brodie, Schelling, Osgood, or Kissinger, the author examines in detail the weapon systems that make today's world such a precarious place in which to live."—*Perspective*

"... An excellent contribution to a broader understanding of international politics and an awareness of trends in China politics, the Soviet Union, and control of the defense budget."—*Choice*

"These essays by Edward Luttwak surely establish him as one of the outstanding strategic thinkers of our age."—Robert W. Tucker, Johns Hopkins University

ISBN: 0-87855-904-3 (paper) **$9.95**
1980 **328 pp.**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two New Releases from Prometheus

The Victim's Song
Alice Kaminsky

In *The Victim's Song*, an English professor whose son was brutally slain in a New York City subway describes her trauma and offers a provocative defense of victims' rights.

Kaminsky "writes superbly, mastering her grief and fury, channeling them into a passionate, intelligent, searing indictment of a society she feels cares more for criminals than their victims."

—**Booklist* (Starred Review)

"Unmistakably the work of an intellectual. . . . a welcome change from the cant about crime . . ."

—*New York Times*

$19.95

Out of Order
Affirmative Action and the Crisis of Doctrinaire Liberalism
Nicholas Capaldi

Out of Order is the definitive critique of affirmative action. It is a sustained and comprehensive examination of the historical, legal, political, sociological, economic, moral, and philosophical dimensions of an issue that has tested the national conscience for two decades.

"A severe scrutiny of the policy of affirmative action."

—*Indianapolis News*

$17.95

☐ **The Victim's Song** **$19.95**
☐ **Out of Order** **$17.95**

Add $2.00 for postage and handling. (NYS residents add applicable sales tax.)

My check/M.O. for _____ is enclosed.

Or charge (check one) ☐ **VISA** ☐ **MasterCard**

Account # Exp. Date

Signature

Name

Address

City/State Zip

PROMETHEUS BOOKS
700 E. Amherst St., Buffalo, NY 14215
Call Toll Free: 800-421-0351
In NYS: 716-837-2475

Com.

and impose such a plan. But judges are not equipped to do that kind of detailed work, and so he recruited several experts and "special masters" (i.e., surrogate judges) to help produce a plan. One of them was former Massachusetts Attorney General Edward J. McCormack, a liberal who was also a native of South Boston, which was the heart of the angriest resistance to integration. McCormack quickly decided that for a plan to have any hope of success, it would have to be shaped by consultations with the affected parties, and so he set about trying to broker a deal.

"In weeks of shuttle diplomacy," Lukas writes, "he negotiated a Phase II plan with broad support." Unlike the temporary Phase I plan that covered only part of the city, this would cover all of it, and do so in the face of already fierce opposition. The McCormack plan had several key provisions. Pupils could attend a school within their districts (drawn so as to include both black and white neighborhoods) or attend one of several "magnet schools" containing special, or especially high-quality, programs designed to draw students from all over the city. The ratio of blacks to whites in the various districts would range from 5 per 100 in East Boston to 75 per 100 in Roxbury. Enrollment in the voluntary magnet schools was to reflect the citywide ratios—about 36 blacks per 100. Most important, there would be no busing between South Boston and all-black Roxbury; instead, blacks from nearby Dorchester would be moved into Southie.

There were opponents of the McCormack scheme. Some blacks and white liberals criticized it for not integrating schools enough; other black leaders, like Professor Charles Willie, preferred giving blacks control over their own schools to attempting to mix whites and blacks into white-controlled schools. But most of the experts and masters felt the McCormack plan represented a reasonable balance among the contending interests.

Judge Garrity changed his experts' plan. He imposed a more uniform racial balance on the various school districts, increased the amount of busing, and ordered that pupils from Roxbury be bused into South Boston. A decade of trench warfare began.

THE chief lesson I derive from Lukas's book (I do not know whether he would agree with my judgment) is the deep difference between the law and politics, between deciding rights and solving problems, between correcting wrongs and managing institutions. Judge Garrity decided the case by the strictest legal standards to be inferred from extant constitutional law. Abolishing barriers to blacks entering all-white schools was not enough; blacks and whites actually had to be in schools and classrooms together, whatever their preferences in the matter. Insuring that blacks and whites were actually in school together was not enough; the ratio between the races had to approximate their ratio in the city as a whole. Achieving this mixture in places where it could be done with the minimum disruption and protest was not enough; the mixing had to occur in the very bastions of white opposition and in those schools—the high schools—where the fears of both blacks and whites were the keenest and the potential for violence was the greatest. A city that cried out for governance got adjudication instead.

Some will say that Judge Garrity had no choice. I disagree, but I know of no way to settle the issue. In 1954, the Supreme Court in the *Brown* case said that "separate schools were inherently unequal." In 1968, it said in the *Green* case that ending separation meant producing a "unitary, nonracial system of public education." In 1971 in the *Swann* case, it reviewed a variety of methods to remove racism from the assignment of pupils to schools. It concluded that the existence of a "small number of one-race, or virtually one-race, schools" was not in and of itself evidence of segregation, and hence was acceptable (albeit subject to "close scrutiny"). It approved "the very limited use . . . of mathematical ratios," or racial quotas, in assigning pupils, but commented that this was not an "inflexible requirement." It approved court-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ordered busing ("Desegregation plans cannot be limited to the walk-in school") but did not insist that busing was essential in every place where black and white pupils lived some distance from each other. Moreover, the Court recognized that communities will not remain demographically stable, and so the schools and supervising courts are not required by the Constitution to make "year-by-year adjustments in the racial composition of student bodies once the affirmative duty to desegregate has been accomplished." The Court looked forward to a quick end to the intervention of district-court judges.

So far as I can tell from the record, Judge Garrity took the most expansive, not the most moderate, view of his powers and duties under prevailing Supreme Court doctrine. He intervened in great detail and for many years. He was intolerant of any one-race schools. He did not view racial quotas as flexible guides to achieving integration, but as precise goals in and of themselves. He made year-by-year adjustments in all phases of the plan, and directed that action be taken on the most minute aspects of school management (a former Boston school superintendent once told me, perhaps in exaggeration, that the judge was selecting the Bunsen burners for the science laboratories). Far from looking forward to a quick end to his intervention, he acted as if he relished his continuing supervision of the Boston schools.

THE supremely ironical consequence of the judge's role is recorded in the story of Colin Diver who, with his wife Joan, moved into a racially mixed neighborhood in the South End, refurbished a dilapidated home on a street just beginning to undergo gentrification, and enrolled their son in a neighborhood public school where the parents, black and white, worked hard to create and sustain an invigorating educational atmosphere. Soon it had the reputation for providing, with broad community support, quality integrated education. Judge Garrity, seeing this success, decided to redraw district lines so that 90 of the 175 re-

"A REAGAN REGULATORY OFFICIAL has denied that the [seat-belt] issue is one of pure paternalism because, he says, taxpayers pick up the medical bills of crash victims. This is sophistry. Bad enough, by any measure, to have the government nationalize the health system; but far worse for it to nationalize our very bodies and treat us as trespassers on government property when we put wear and tear on them."

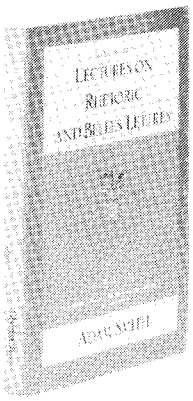
For a free copy of the current issue of National Review write to Dept. C-10. 150 East 35th Street. New York, N.Y. 10016.

At last . . .
a book review for **conservatives**

In the current issue:
Emil Fackenheim, "Leo Strauss and Judaism"; South Africa and the American Political Tradition; AIDS and the Ideology of Bureaucrats, Mr. Keillor's Neighborhood; and much more.

Introductory rate: One year (four issues), $10.00; two years, $18.00. *Claremont Review of Books*, 4650 Arrow Hwy., D-7, Montclair, California 91763.

LibertyPress
LibertyClassics



Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres

By Adam Smith
The Glasgow Edition
Edited by J. C. Bryce

Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres consists of transcriptions of the notes of an unknown student who attended Smith's lectures in 1762-63. This manuscript was first discovered by John M. Lothian of the University of Aberdeen in 1958. In these lectures, Smith demonstrated the connection of language and the ability to communicate thoughts and inclinations to the development of sympathy and fellow-feeling, concepts central to his more famous works.
291 pages.
Introduction, appendices, index.
Softcover Only $5.50, 0-86597-052-1

Prepayment is required on all orders not for resale. We pay book rate postage on prepaid orders. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. *All* orders from outside the United States *must* be prepaid *in U.S. dollars*. To order, or for a copy of our catalogue, write:
Liberty*Press*/Liberty*Classics*
7440 North Shadeland, Dept. R104
Indianapolis, IN 46250

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turning pupils would be reassigned elsewhere and 140 new pupils brought in from elsewhere. The parents who had created a quality, integrated school were now going to have their children sent elsewhere to schools that were much inferior, and parents of the children newly assigned to the school from other areas had no interest in the particular innovative programs that had been developed in the South End. The parents protested to Judge Garrity, but to no avail. Soon, bitter conflict broke out beween the parents of the children already there and the parents of those newly arrived, conflict exacerbated by the judge's order that each racial group had to form a separate caucus to elect members of the "Racial-Ethnic Parents' Council." Pseudo-integration by judicial order had replaced actual integration by social processes.

Lukas does not really explain—perhaps no one can—why Judge Garrity chose to play the role he did. Lukas seems to have learned less about the judge and the judge's thinking on the case than about any other aspect of the Boston story. It may well be that the judge, who is acknowledged as an interviewee, refused—quite properly—to discuss a case that was still before him. Whatever the reason, *Common Ground* as an account of the struggle over school integration suffers: it is *Hamlet* with only a sketchy, incomplete picture of the Prince of Denmark.

Redemption from Without

THE GERMAN JEW: A SYNTHESIS OF JUDAISM AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION, 1730-1930. By H.I. BACH. *Oxford University Press. 255 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by RICHARD S. LEVY

THE German-Jewish experience, no longer a living reality, ought to be studied with as much scholarly detachment as is applied to that other great epoch of Jewish history in the Diaspora, the Golden Age in Spain. But the catastrophe which ended that earlier experiment, namely, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, is remote, "historical," and therefore lacking in emotional impact. By contrast, the Holocaust, which ended the physical existence of the German-Jewish relationship, is too immediate and too loaded with meaning to be treated as mere history. This is why, more often than not, we still find German Jews the objects of passionate advocacy—venerated for their cultural creativity or pitied for their political blindness, admired for their dignity in the face of tragedy or reviled for their simultaneous arrogance toward other Jews and their cravenness toward things German.

This book, by charting the effects of emancipation and assimilation upon German Jews, contributes original insights to the debate over the essential meaning of the German-Jewish experience. Instead of seeking the causes of the Holocaust, H.I. Bach analyzes what has survived it. Bach, who died in 1977, spent his formative years in Germany, participating in the experience he seeks to explain. The autobiographical impulse is clearly at work in a book which is nevertheless in the tradition of objective scholarship, and *The German Jew* is the wonderfully informative product of a lifelong concern with Jewish thought and German culture.

BACH's thesis is grand in scope. In the two centuries between Moses Mendelssohn and Franz Rosenzweig, that is, from the time of Enlightenment and emancipation to the eve of their destruction, the Jews of Germany entered fully and wholeheartedly into German (and European) civilization. The emotional cost of this process was enormous, producing disorientation in its early stages and leading ultimately to the near-loss of spiritual identity. Toward the end of the era, however, a number of thoroughly Europeanized individuals rediscovered, redefined, and reinvigorated their Jewish heritage. An age-old Judaism, ennobled and enriched by the best in German thought, achieved a new stage of development. This "synthesis of Western Judaism," writes Bach, will survive the Holocaust and be remembered as the special, the unique contribution of German Jewry.

Well-schooled in German idealism, Bach has written here an unalloyed history of ideas, showing only casual interest in social, economic, and political developments. In good Hegelian fashion, he begins by describing the psychological conditions which prompted Jews to seek entrance into European life. By the end of the 17th century, the Jews of Germany, living in both forced and voluntary withdrawal from Christian Europe, had suffered through several messianic hoaxes. Rabbinical authority had declined dramatically, and the attempt to find salvation by means of inner purification had lost credibility. Then, in the mid-18th century, Moses Mendelssohn inaugurated a new phase, seeking redemption from without by entering European society and actively participating in it.

The timing was fortunate. Gentile society was in the throes of the Enlightenment. Traditional Christianity, for at least the tiny minority that might accept Mendelssohn as an equal, was in abeyance. The operative values in human relationships had become rational self-cultivation, an appreciation of beauty, individualism, and a cosmopolitan outlook. It seemed possible, on this basis, to bridge the gulf between Jews and Christians.

In a touchingly sensitive portrait, Bach describes Mendelssohn's dignified struggle to escape from the darkness of the ghetto into the light of Europe. His mastery of the German language (he translated Rousseau's *Social Contract* from the French in order to polish his German) and of the vocabulary of the Enlightenment gradually won him the friendship of Lessing and Kant. What made his example so compelling to other Jews, according to Bach, was his apparent ability to achieve the respect of Gentiles while yet remaining a Jew.

Mendelssohn adhered to the faith, but he also began the process of redefining it, making it palatable to the enlightened and usable for Jews in altered situations. He presented Judaism as the religion of reason, of positive ideas

RICHARD S. LEVY *teaches history at the University of Illinois at Chicago.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and universal significance. No longer a set of distinctive ceremonial practices or a way of life separating Jews from Christians, Judaism became a religion of ideas, open to the glories of German thought, and compatible with full participation in German life.

That participation remained, however, an ideal. Bach admits that Jews were not fully accepted by Germans; in fact, he paradoxically credits the continuing antagonism German Jews encountered with producing a heightened Jewish consciousness. Yet on the whole he finds not rejection but good will and acceptance on the part of the "host society"—often, I am afraid, where these did not exist. Even in Mendelssohn's case, one may doubt the degree to which his contemporaries truly accepted him. His election to the Prussian Academy was voided by the "enlightened" Frederick the Great. The interest he elicited from Europeans like Mirabeau had an element of the freak show about it; for many of the enlightened, excluding Lessing, he remained the "exception Jew," the one who proved the rule. Bach fails to note that even those Gentiles who championed full Jewish equality—always a small subgroup of the educated—expected emancipation to hasten the complete dissolution of the Jewish people and Judaism as distinguishable entities.

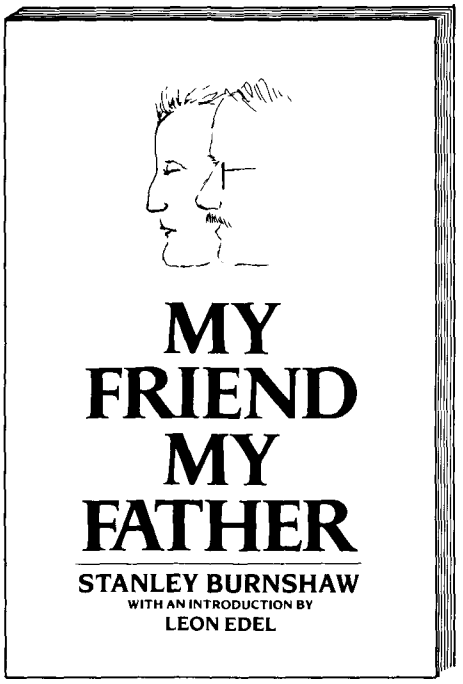
BACH, then, is only half-right. Mendelssohn's example did not remove the doubts of Germans—but it was vastly inspiring to Jews. Those who saw in the tenets of humanism points of contact with Jewish monotheism and the social ideas of Mosaic law no longer felt that they had utterly to deny their Jewishness in order to live in the world of Goethe, Schiller, Kant, and Fichte. After Mendelssohn, however, they did have to come to terms with the meaning of the Jewishness they intended to retain.

At first, considerable confusion reigned. Apostasy and intermarriage were frequent in the early 19th century. For some Jews the transformation of Judaism from a way of life into the religion of universal ideas proved too abrupt; for these, Reform Judaism provided a way-station by preserving at least a few of the comforting traditional ceremonies. By contrast, the neo-Orthodox response, as represented by Jacob Bernays (Bach wrote his authoritative biography), insisted on a more rigorous adherence to rabbinic Judaism.

Still another way of maintaining an acceptable Jewish identity while participating fully in modern German life was to conceive of Judaism as a subject of scholarship; the "Science of Judaism" founded by Leopold Zunz and Eduard Gans was the preeminent such endeavor. (Typically, Bach makes little of the immediate context for this development, the anti-Jewish riots of 1819, or of the later rejection by the University of Berlin of Zunz's application to have Judaism accepted as a legitimate field of study.)

Taken as a whole, the variety

"A living example of what, occasionally, and with the right people, can happen in the world."—*James Dickey*



"The [life] of the figure that emerges . . . spans a crucial transition period in Jewish history from optimistic acculturation ('Enlightenment') to the years of Nazi terror and the eve of the founding of Israel. The narrative is thus equally fascinating as a historical document and as a fine instance of the biographer's art."
—*Robert Alter*

In *My Friend, My Father,* Stanley Burnshaw pays tribute to his Jewish immigrant father, a son of the Great Enlightenment who struggled to maintain his belief in the one universal religion, the power of education, and the progress of man in an era bloodied by the hate and treachery of the Second World War.

160 pp. $7.95

Available at better bookstores or directly from

OXFORD PAPERBACKS
Oxford University Press
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and originality of the adaptations devised by Jews testify to their deep desire to retain rather than to throw away their Jewish identity. Nonetheless, according to Bach, as the 19th century progressed and Jews achieved full legal equality (1869), a void was opening in their lives. How to merge into Western civilization without perishing spiritually in the process was still a question that plagued the more sensitive among them. Complicating the situation was a kind of brain drain from the disintegrating Jewish community into society at large.

THE creative cultural flowering which has come to be known as the "German-Jewish symbiosis" is seen by Bach as a product of the secularization of Jewish religious convictions. Under this rubric he includes a bewildering variety of modern developments, from bacteriology, sociology, psychoanalysis, socialism, and much of modern science to the industrial empires of Emil Rathenau and Albert Ballin. That these developments somehow owed more to Jewish than to Hellenic or Christian or capitalist impulses is certainly a highly debatable proposition, but it plays an important role in Bach's general thesis, namely, that such "creative new applications of the spiritual content of Judaism" drove Jews further away from Judaism.

The contributions Jews made to German science, art, music, and literature served, Bach writes, only to reinforce their sense of the superiority of Gentile civilization and the irrelevance of their Jewish identity. Having lost the protective shell of a tightly knit, closed community, Jews felt themselves vulnerable and dependent. With the emergence of modern political anti-Semitism in the late 1870's, they found themselves not physically endangered—the German state protected them from violence—but psychologically defenseless. Where in the 17th century they had sold their property in order to be ready to return to Zion with the appearance of the messiah, now they seemed to be sacrificing their spiritual goods for yet another false promise of salvation.

In this dire situation, four key individuals—Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Leo Baeck, and Franz Rosenzweig—appeared on the scene and accomplished, according to Bach, the synthesis of Western Judaism. Looking at Judaism and Jewish history through Western eyes, they rediscovered its significance for modern lives. Their writings and their activities, centering on the nature and mission of Judaism, helped "great numbers of German Jews" to find a new spiritual identity, even as the physical situation of German Jews was becoming more perilous.

It is not possible to do justice here to Bach's discussion of the conflicts and compromises that swirled around these men in the first three decades of the 20th century. The depth and intelligence of that discussion are among the book's great merits. Furthermore, in elucidating the contents of the synthesis they created, Bach provides a needed corrective to the conventional notion of German Jewry as a deeply divided community. He argues persuasively that except for a few Zionists, for whom he has not much use, and a minority of the Orthodox, German Jews shared an essentially common ethos, three of whose features were a firm belief in the value of Western ideals, a sense of shared destiny, and a refusal to return to a ghetto existence.

There remains, however, a basic problem with Bach's thesis. What motivated these four individuals to redefine Judaism as they did? Once again, as in his treatment of Mendelssohn, Bach puts the process in much too rosy a light. For him, the strongest impetus came from the inner vitality of Judaism itself. In addition, the hard-won fruits of European civilization were beginning to appear less juicy by the early 20th century. Culture had been mastered, but the "salvation from without" had not materialized. Finally, the continuing rejection of Jews in the form of anti-Semitism helped turn sensitive Jews inward.

THIS ordering of causes places much too little emphasis on the last, the continuing rejection of Jews. Uninterested in the socio-economic underpinnings of modern anti-Semitism, Bach is as mystified by its survival as were many of the Jews he writes about. He contends that a majority of Germans had come to view Jews as Jews had come to see themselves, "Germans of Jewish faith." This is simply wrong. For most Germans of all classes, Jews were aliens. Wrong also is the statement that the growing German nationalist movement limited its aggressive anti-Semitism to those Jews who remained loyal to their religion. The evidence is overwhelming that assimilated, acculturated Jews came in for the most hysterical abuse at the hands of anti-Semitic ideologues. As for Bach's four key individuals, it would have been remarkable had they failed to register the irrefutable evidence of their essential, personal non-acceptability to the Germans among whom they lived. Hermann Cohen, for example, the most comfortably "German" among them, was professor of philosophy at the University of Marburg, where the librarian was the young Otto Böckel, already the first avowedly anti-Semitic Reichstag deputy and the initiator of a quite ominous anti-Semitic political movement.

Bach's consistent undervaluation of Jewish alienness is understandable, for the reality of that condition casts retrospective doubt on the validity of the whole experiment in "symbiosis." One could argue, indeed, that virtually all the manifold responses to their condition devised by German Jews, and so eloquently described by Bach, were motivated by a futile effort to gain true acceptance. If so, the real significance of the German-Jewish experience is not to be found in the cultural riches to which it undoubtedly gave birth, or in Bach's discovery of a synthesis of Western Judaism, but in the Jewish capacity for self-delusion. And if that is so, it might at least partially explain the passionate interest German Jewry can still evoke, especially in American Jews, who for all the manifest and undeniable differences in their situation must sometimes wonder whether they too are not living the lives—and some of the lies—of German Jews.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Losing Hope

LIBERALISM AND ITS CHALLENGERS: FDR to REAGAN. By ALONZO L. HAMBY. *Oxford University Press. 386 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER KAPLAN

TWICE in a row, American voters have elected by large majorities the most conservative presidential candidate since Herbert Hoover. It would appear, moveover, that intellectual life in our country now has a conservative inflection. And most significantly of all, for the first time in the nation's history conservatives seem to be, paradoxically, the party of the future, the party of hope.

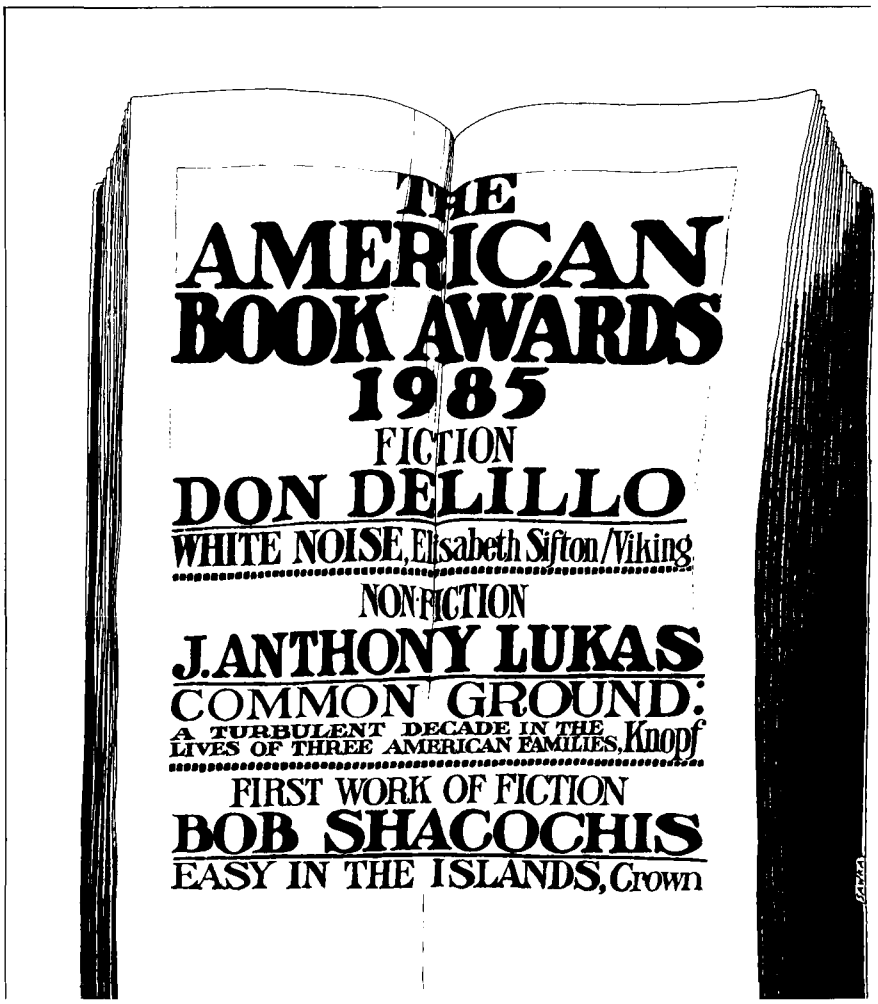
Normally, the party of hope lives on the liberal side, for the simple reason that in an imperfect world, hope springs from a vision of change, and liberalism has historically signified the willingness to embrace and even encourage change. Because America has been the nation most successful at reconciling change and social order, liberalism has been its dominant political tradition. Even though, for most of the 19th and 20th centuries, liberals have by no means been in the political majority, the history of American politics, in the 20th century especially, is largely the history of liberalism's slow but successful conquest of the bastions of political power and the centers of ideas.

If prior to World War I, for instance, one had argued that Americans must transform themselves into a racially integrated society, or that that society must undertake vast international commitments, or that the federal government must concern itself with the education and the health of its citizens, young and old—if one had maintained these things, one would have been considered eccentric or even subversive. But these objectives constituted the liberal program, already discernible in most of its details, and this program, of course, has been achieved.

To be sure, liberalism is of far more than merely historical interest even if it is agreed that in 1968, when it tried to take America's capacity for change beyond a point that our society could tolerate, liberalism suffered a political blow from which it has not yet recovered. The question is: did liberalism contain the seeds of its own failure, and, conversely, might it contain the seeds of its own renewal? The prudent historian, eschewing teleological explanations, would study instead the steps that might have been taken differently: the beginnings of national economic planning under FDR; the development of a great national army in World War II and its aftermath, and with it a specialized national-security establishment; the critical move from the concept of the social safety net to the notion of welfare entitlements; and so forth. Perhaps it was not fated that the ideas growing out of the experience of the Wilson and Roosevelt eras should have played themselves out quite the way they did.

Some liberals today, called neoconservatives, argue that *their* liberalism—the liberalism, essentially, of Harry Truman—was betrayed during and after the 1968 revolt against Lyndon Johnson. Others in this camp argue—following, up to a point, such 1950's conservatives as Whittaker Chambers and James Burnham—that the rot can be traced quite specifically to Wilsonian and Rooseveltian illusions about the world, abroad and at home. It is significant that Chambers and Burnham both came from the Left. The argument, which can only be articulated by ex-leftists, concerns the tension between tradition and change in a civilization based on hope. This question is a crucial and fundamental one, because it affects profoundly liberalism's destiny. Yet in *Liberalism and Its Challengers*, Alonzo Hamby, a historian at Ohio State University, fails even to raise it.

What were the intellectual and political forces that constituted 20th-century American liberalism?



ROGER KAPLAN *is on the editorial page staff of the Detroit* News.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What elements of this movement did leaders as diverse as FDR and Martin Luther King, Jr. draw from to achieve their objectives, and what did they contribute to it? These are the questions that Hamby tries to answer. Unfortunately, his effort remains only that. "The writing of contemporary history," he remarks in his introduction, "is at best a difficult business." It is, indeed: so difficult that, instead of explaining the "contemporary American political tradition" that is his subject, Hamby provides a series of biographical essays numbing in their superficiality, combining conventional pieties about the accomplishments of Presidents and other political figures since FDR with psychological speculations that are embarrassing when they are not distracting.

On Roosevelt, Hamby offers the following banalities: "Roosevelt left a deep imprint upon his era. . . . [F]rom almost any vantage point, the nation was stronger and more secure at his death than at the time he took office." There is this on Truman: "[A]lmost all observers have agreed that whatever Truman was, he was enormously different from his awesome predecessor . . . [yet] in fundamental attributes of thought and character, the two were far more similar than different."

Biography is surely important to historical understanding, but the historian must be able to make up his mind about his subject, the personalities and ideas around him, and all the other elements that help explain his political behavior and illuminate the unique and unpredictable relationship between the individual and his time. There is, unfortunately, none of this in Hamby. He notes that Robert Kennedy adopted a radical rhetoric during his race for the Presidency, but he in no way prepares the reader for the obvious question: what actually was new here? Was this liberalism's logical outcome, stemming from the Roosevelt-Truman period, or did something go drastically wrong—or were there avoidable errors of judgment?

The same questions are left begging in the story of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose repudiation of the Great Society and rebellion against his most powerful ally, Lyndon Johnson, merit deep examination. As with Robert Kennedy, Hamby weighs vague psychological possibilities that would explain King's behavior and considers the influence on him of the extreme Left. But much more than a brief glance is needed.

THE relationship between liberalism and the New Left (in all its various guises) is of fundamental importance, and a book ostensibly concerned with the challenges to liberalism ought to have something to say about that diffuse, sometimes anarchic, sometimes surprisingly disciplined front for what could fairly be called a nihilistic attack on American society. Hamby contributes astonishingly little to our understanding of this phenomenon, so central to his story, though he does have this to say about Robert Kennedy:

> To the New Left and Left-liberal thinking of the time, the entire spectacle [of LBJ's travails in domestic and foreign policy] laid bare the bankruptcy of establishment liberalism, representative primarily of the well-to-do, manipulative of the underclasses but superficial in its concern for them, and prone to disastrous military adventures abroad. Kennedy and his advisers accepted much of this diagnosis . . . but like Martin Luther King . . . he found it difficult to develop credible prescriptions. . . .

This observation remains undeveloped. Of the so-called New Class, the generation that grew out of liberalism's encounter with the New Left, Hamby remarks: "Relatively rootless . . . anti-commercial by career choice and strong conviction, the New Class took liberalism well to the Left. . . ." But the big story is not that a new class (about which in any event Hamby has no original insights) emerged; the big story is that liberalism lost its nerve and its optimism. In this respect, Allen J. Matusow's *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960's* (1984) goes much farther than Hamby in explicating the cultural and intellectual factors that led the party of hope to become the party of despair and appeasement, though by focusing narrowly on one decade Matusow can only hint at the threads, both positive and negative, that ran from the New Freedom to the Great Society.

The theme remains a fascinating and important one. There is much talk of a party realignment these days, but the only important issue is whether the Republicans, traditional political vehicle of the conservative party, can turn themselves into the party of hope. To do this they will have to understand how and why the Democrats became so susceptible to ideas that made them behave timidly abroad, arrogantly at home. More to the point, they must take to heart the need of any society, and a democratic society above all, to maintain intact an agreed-upon hierarchy of values. It appears the current administration, albeit much more hesitantly than was expected, is trying to find its way to this position. If it succeeds, a truly new chapter will have been opened in the history of American liberalism.

Marxism's Legacy

ALIEN POWERS: THE PURE THEORY OF IDEOLOGY. By KENNETH MINOGUE. *St. Martin's. 255 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by EDWARD PEARCE

ONE does not lightly pick up a book whose subtitle is "The Pure Theory of Ideology," even if the title proper suggests something by Arthur C. Clark. Indeed, Kenneth Minogue, a formidable academic follower in the skeptical ways of the English conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott, is occasionally given to drawing his doctoral gown close about him and talking as etiolated mind to etiolated mind. Such lapses into heaviness are a pity, for he has also written a deeply valuable work about the core of Marxist thought and the cast of mind, not necessarily Marxist itself, which has taken its vocabulary, its reflexes, and its

EDWARD PEARCE *is an editorialist and the parliamentary sketch writer on the London* Daily Telegraph.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

priestly intolerance from the grim Master of Trier.

"Ideology" is of course a word which antedates Marx; it appears to have been invented by an obscure French zoologist, Antoine Destutt de Tracy, at the time of the French Revolution. It was Marx, however, who created the church, set the altar, and wrote the canon law of what tends to be seen, even by unbelievers, as *the* ideology. In an interview not cited by Minogue, Ernesto "Che" Guevara once observed that Marxism was as naturally true as the Newtonian system (omitting as he spoke certain developments in modern physics). And it was Marx, too, who gave this ideology its peculiar moral thrust. Minogue, quoting a passage from *The Communist Manifesto* ("Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word oppressor and oppressed . . ."), glosses it as follows:

> We support the oppressed and hate the oppressors whenever we encounter bourgeois and proletarian, male and female, imperialist and native. There is thus a moral principle at work ordering the structuring of ideological analysis and determining its emphases.

At the heart of things there is Marx's short preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*:

> In the social production of their life men enter into definitive relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

We are, in other words, the prisoners of a structure; the structure determines how we shall think, the development of the structure how our thinking will change. In this respect there are superficial, though deeply misleading, affinities between Marxism and self-confident 19th-century liberalism, which also hated oppression, though (with its supposedly defective consciousness) it regarded reform rather than revolution as inevitable.

Marx's concept of a structure within which the unknowing oppressed move about, waiting for their consciousness to be raised or for the midwives of history to induce birth, was harnessed to an economic theory, the notion of surplus value. Intelligent Marxists are notably embarrassed by this theory; the British economist Joan Robinson spoke of it as developing, in some contexts, "a kind of squint which leaves one deeply confused." Faced with the conspicuous non-collapse of capitalism, and also with the propensity of Communism to establish itself either by conquest (as in Eastern Europe) or through the distress of peasant societies no more ready for this determinist conclusion than was England in the 13th century, Marxists have had to come up with some fast footwork. Thus, Claus Offe:

> The self-destructive tendencies of the capitalist mode of production evolve in a historical process and their destructive and revolutionary potential can well be controlled and kept latent through various adaptive mechanisms of the system at least temporarily.

Fast footwork, that is, for a man imprisoned in moon boots.

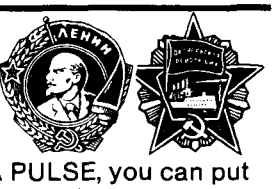
The point might be made that the pure ideology of Marx—the determinism, the notion of consciousness, the cash nexus, and all—provides believers with a formidable psychological boost. Marxists are commonly armed with a winning-side psychology, a superiority complex. If you are equipped with scientific truth, even if it is only scientific by the broad and forgiving standards of the first half of the 19th century, all contrary views can be rejected either by vituperation, a habit passed down in the family from Marx's own foul-tempered and intolerant example, or by a lordly act of non-recognition. Inevitability has its uses.

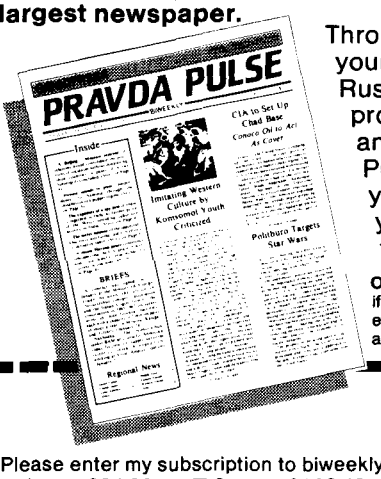
In this connection Minogue puts much emphasis, and rightly, on the passion for quotation marks among Marxists and other ideologues who have learned Marxist ways. In a

How do the Soviets perceive the world?

Is their system succeeding or is it failing?
Are they afraid or are they ambitious?

PRAVDA PULSE is impartially translated from PRAVDA, the Soviet Union's largest newspaper.





Through PRAVDA PULSE, you can put yourself in the shoes of an ordinary Russian as he reads news (including propaganda), commentary, cartoons and government announcements. Published biweekly (26 issues per year), PRAVDA PULSE will enable you to keep in constant touch with the changing mood in the USSR.

Our Pledge to You - News Pulse, Inc. guarantees that if, at any time, PRAVDA PULSE does not meet your expectations, you can cancel and we'll refund the full amount of your unused subscription.

News Pulse, Inc.
P.O. Drawer 4323
Ft. Pierce, FL 33448-4323

Please enter my subscription to biweekly PRAVDA PULSE (26 issues per year)
☐ 1 year $64.20 ☐ 2 years $128.40
☐ Payment enclosed (in Canada add $6 U.S.) Bill to: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard
Account No. _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passage which deserves anthologizing for the elegance with which it transfixes its target, Minogue speaks of ideology's way of filling the page with

> twitches, nudges, and winks indicated by quotation marks, which do not signify quotation but rather dissent from, and hostility to, the ordinary meaning of a term. The quotation mark is ideology scowling. . . . Often the specific intention is to disavow the approving content of words of approval so that terms like "neutral," "benevolent," "law and order," "good," and their like are hardly ever used without the escort of their regular flotilla of inverted commas.

KENNETH MINOGUE acknowledges the ideological temptations of his own profession. There have always been, he tells us, love affairs between men of action and philosophers, exemplified by Machiavelli and Plato. "The history of ideology is, among other things, an oscillation between the attractions of power, for many philosophers have felt about the world as Marx did, that the point is to change it, and the speculative recoil which carries philosophers back to pure thought." But in most cases the ideas have only been levers for immediate, specific political actions. Ideology is different in that it has pretensions to universality: "The ideologist monopolizes change by virtue of the assumption that he alone represents it, and everything else, including a competing ideologist, is, in one way or another, an instrument of reaction." In this respect ideologists of all stripes have inherited from Marx a claim on "the structural drives which moved the world forward." In our own day, any self-styled world system, however grotesque or intellectually contemptible, from radical feminism to Jonestown, is likely to see itself as an ideology.

Minogue skillfully lets such latter-day absolutists do themselves in. Thus Susan Brownmiller:

> Police-blotter rapists in a very real sense perform a myrmidon function for all men in our society . . . they function as anonymous agents of terror. Although they are the ones who do the dirty work, the actual *attentat*, to the other men, their superiors in class or station, the lasting benefits of their simple-minded evil have always accrued.

This sort of thinking, if that is quite the word we want, is the detritus of ideology, a few tricky habits picked up from the rhetoric of Marx, a slippery way of commuting from the specific to the general, the voicing of the question *cui bono* so as to infer a class interest in an evil —by such means does Miss Brownmiller build her model. Rationally we know that acts of rape are committed, that some husbands also bully their wives, but that the majority do not so bully them and that the male sex is overwhelmingly disgusted by the act of rape. But no matter. Miss Brownmiller is into raising consciousness, whatever she may be doing to the truth and the statistical record; but she is also in the decayed line of Marx, arguing from an oppressive act to a universal condition of oppression.

Exactly the same contortion was worked long ago to explain how industrial workers, whose standard of living has risen steadily since the Manchester of 1840, are nevertheless still oppressed. Oppression is, after all, the family business, and trade must be kept up and new lines brought onto the market. Fascist ways of behaving have similarly been harnessed to the achievement of an end supposed to be ineluctable. As Minogue puts it: "Political rallies, consciousness-raising sessions, agitation and propaganda, are all ideological devices for attempting to *make* true what has already been declared to be true." Phrases from the 1960's like "repressive tolerance" speak wonderfully of the way in which an unsatisfactory and relaxed reality can be snapped into line to conform with the drill of expectation.

But when the boot is on the other foot and stamping, the rules change with it. Georg Lukács, so often, so fatuously cited in the West as a liberal Marxist, put it clearly for all time in a sentence. "The question of legality and illegality reduces itself then for the Communist party to a mere *question of tactics*, even to a question to be resolved on the spur of the moment." This was very much the practice of the invading Soviet tanks when in 1956 they swept away the government of Imre Nagy, in which Georg Lukács had served as Minister of Education. That government, created at the instance of a rebellious people objectively, subjectively, and every-which-way oppressed, was a coalition of liberals, social democrats, and Communists. Reality and ideology had their fingers around each others' throats in Budapest during November-December 1956. Fortunately for the Soviet Union, reality won.

I grumbled at the outset about the academic aspects of *Alien Powers*, but these are merely a reflection of its seriousness and depth. Minogue understands Marxism, and, holding a liberal-conservative point of view, is a model of scruple and rational argument. He has given us a guide to the exploitation of Marxism by its own boss class and shown us the effects upon contemporary faddists of a universalist theory with a strong theoretical grounding. This is a superb attempt to locate the ultimate charm of a once-formidable body of thought, patched and bandaided over the last 140 years by exegesis and flagrant intellectual opportunism.

"Only a Murder"

THE VICTIM'S SONG. By ALICE R. KAMINSKY. *Prometheus. 268 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by RACHEL ABRAMS

YEARS ago, long before I became a mother, a friend of mine was raped and murdered. She was twenty-four. The brutality of the thing was heightened in my imagination by the fact that the act itself, the crime, was committed within earshot (it was later divulged, well after she was buried, that there had been what to hear) of rich people, also no doubt well-educated and civilized people, who in ordinary circumstances would

RACHEL ABRAMS *has written for* COMMENTARY, *the* Wall Street Journal, *and the* American Spectator.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

probably have considered themselves to be *good* people: good neighbors, certainly; charitable; perhaps even brave people. In these particular circumstances they had shut out the sounds they were hearing.

Mind you, my friend always fancied danger—it was thus that she ended up in the car of her murderer—living at the edge, as she used to say, and she liked to have people there with her. I remember telephone calls, always at two in the morning or thereabouts, in which she would report having downed a full bottle of sleeping pills, or Darvon, or whatever, and inquiring as to what I might be prepared to do about it. I remember bulletins from her frightened neighbors about the smell of gas from her apartment below. I remember with particular vividness watching her approach one day and realizing, as when you open your eyes from sleep and the world comes slowly to you, that what I was looking at, poorly hidden under a scarf, were razor-slash marks all over her neck. She had put them there herself. I remember that. And yet, and yet, the people who witnessed her murder, that is who heard it, described a person who at the moment of death struggled only, fervently, passionately to keep herself alive.

At her funeral, and the seven-day mourning period afterward, her mother and father floated like ghosts. God knows the Valium flowing in their veins couldn't have made a dent. I undersood that then, but now I have three children, so I really do know it. I watched them throw their shovelsful onto that box and wondered if they were going to survive burying their child. Later on I surveyed the gathering: in those seven bizarre days the greater part of mourning, remembering, etc. was done by us, her friends, children. At some point in this nightmare her father said to me: "You know, I always knew she was going to kill herself. I just didn't think it was going to be *this* way." If that is how they meant to survive, it was some survival. As far as I am aware her murderer has never been brought to justice. Do her parents dream of it?

"With my bare hands. I would kill with my bare hands someone who killed my child," says a friend who is the mother of an infant. Do I believe her? I have restrained myself, only just, from throttling someone who has hurt one of my children's feelings. I have humiliated myself threatening a six-year-old in the sandbox for laying hands on one of my children. I believe her. Yet I know with gratitude that this is belief in an abstraction. The concrete testimony of Alice Kaminsky on this dreadful subject raises disturbing questions about our ability to secure ourselves in an increasingly slippery world.

HER twenty-two-year-old son, Eric, her only child, a golden boy, was stabbed to death five years ago, for pocket money, in a New York City subway station. *The Victim's Song* is Mrs. Kaminsky's story. She describes first the murder itself, for of course here again we have witnesses, this time eyewitnesses, who could have saved her child; then the arrest of the two teen-aged addicts who committed the crime; then their trial and sentencing—one received 18 to 25 years in prison, the other, the one who actually wielded the knife, 25 years to life; then the personal aftermath.

Woven through all this, and beyond it in a discrete section, is a violently hot indictment of New York City (she calls it the Rotten Apple), its subways, its criminal-court system, its sleazy public lawyers and overworked judges. At one point during the endless series of pretrial hearings to determine what sort of plea each defendant was to enter, Judge Benjamin Altman expostulated with the prosecutor, who had complained one time too many about the defense's stalling tactics: "This is only a murder, Mr. Greenbaum, and I have heard it over, and over, and over again. Only a murder, and we are talking about an eighteen-year-old."

There is an excoriation of the literary celebrators of violence, chief among them Norman Mailer, to whom she has devoted an entire chapter. As criticism it leaves something to be desired, but nevertheless provides a useful catalogue of his sins in this vein. "Dealing with

The first serial publication in the U.S. to focus on the scholarly study of the Holocaust...

SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER ANNUAL

Volume 2

Edited by Henry Friedlander & Sybil Milton
Corresponding Editors: Zwi Bacharach, Wolfgang Benz, & Daniel Landes
Managing Editor: Gerald Margolis (Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center)

"This annual is fascinating, horrifying, and informative. It assumes prior knowledge of the Holocaust, but even general readers may not be able to put it down. College and university libraries should place a standing order now."
— CHOICE, January 1985

CONTENTS: Nisko: The First Experiment in Deportation (Jonny Moser). The Forgotten Part of the "Final Solution": The Liquidation of the Ghettos (Wolfgang Scheffler). Jewish U-Boote in Austria, 1938-1945 (C. Gwyn Moser). Nazi Criminals in the United States: The Fedorenko Case (Henry Friedlander & Earlean M. McCarrick). The Burning of the Books in Nazi Germany, 1933: The American Response (Guy Stern). The Search for the Silver Lining: The American Academic Establishment and the "Aryanization" of German Scholarship (Karen J. Greenberg). Pressing at the Limits: The Challenge of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation to Chemical Warfare Policy (John Ellis & Courtland Moon). Holocaust Numismatics (Joel J. Forman). **Review Articles:** Discussing Holocaust Literature (Ruth K. Angress). Refugees and Survivors: Reception in the New World (David S. Wyman). Understanding the S.S. Imperium (Michael H. Kater). How Popular was the Third Reich? (Michael H. Kater). Jewish Fate in Hungary (László Varga). Precious Legacy or Tragic Heritage? (Jonathan Helfand).

Libraries and institutions are invited to place a standing order for this series. All standing order customers receive a 10% discount.

- *Volume One in this series is available from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, 9760 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035.*

- Volume Two (Cloth, $30.00) is available from the address below. Individuals are respectfully asked to prepay their order, adding $3.00 postage/handling for each book purchased. NYS residents please add sales tax.

KRAUS INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS
A Division of Kraus-Thomson Organization Ltd.
Dept-C
One Water Street
White Plains, New York 10601

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scatology, buggery, incest, and violence is a very remunerative activity for him," she says, and, at another point, "[b]ut nothing that Mailer has written can compete with the sordid story of his relationship with two real criminals: Gary Gilmore and Jack Henry Abbott."

The bereavement racket, the death-and-dying people who are making a killing, so to speak, in the self-help market, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and her ilk, and the grief therapists, get at long last the sound drubbing they so richly deserve. So, too, do those most mysterious of all beings, the forgiving parents of murder victims:

> I despise their inherent dishonesty. . . . All the well-meaning inanities offered by all the well-meaning spiritualists are lies. . . . Eric Walbridge of Essex Junction, Vermont, made the following comment concerning the two youths who raped and murdered his twelve-year-old daughter: "I've no hate for them. They're sick. I've prayed for them." These people are incomprehensible to me. Forgiveness under these conditions seems to be an obscenity.

In one of the most poignant passages she rails against herself:

> [L]ike . . . all the mythological figures who have the courage to avenge foul murder, I feel this intense desire to destroy those who have destroyed what I love. Unfortunately, I am also like Hamlet, incapacitated by my so-called rational mind. So I think and write, and rage and hate, and I do nothing while the memory of my dead son beckons me to action, to revenge . . . whatever the law does will never relieve me of the conviction that I am a coward. I had plenty of opportunity to kill [the murderers] when they were a few feet away from me at the hearings and the trial. Security was lax enough so that I could have shot them. But I really understood for the first time why Hamlet did not just get to it and kill his murderer uncle. Even to kill Evil is abhorrent to the normal human soul.

And in an extravagantly researched chapter on the death penalty Mrs. Kaminsky surveys the arguments, hopping urgently from Camus to the Koran, from Ernest van den Haag to Pope John Paul II, from Walter Berns to the ACLU, to get where she is going, namely, to put it to us that in a society struggling to remain civilized in the face of an explosion of criminality, the execution of murderers is the *only* way to meet what honest people acknowledge are necessities: deterrence, incapacitation, and, ultimately, revenge. These, in turn, being the only proper means of safeguarding that society. She quotes extensively from the works of Berns and van den Haag on the subject to support her position, and argues, as though across a dinner table, literally yelling, with the likes of Henry Schwarzschild of the ACLU, who has apparently gone so far in his opposition to capital punishment as to have said publicly that he would not have recommended it for Adolf Hitler. She cites figures from Gallup and Media General/Associated Press polls indicating overwhelming approval in this country of the death penalty.

Yet for Mrs. Kaminsky, as a citizen of New York State, this form of justice is unavailable. Of the governor who is now largely responsible for this state of affairs, she has this to say:

> When Cuomo vetoed the death penalty he wrote, "I do not believe that responding to violence with violence or death with death is the answer. It does not undo the loss. It has not proved effective in this State or anywhere else; there is no reason to believe it deters future loss. It does not uplift or ennoble our State. It does nothing more than demean us." In my view, Cuomo's veto of the death penalty demeaned my dead son Eric. His argument reveals that it is possible to care more about the murderer than the victim. Why in the world should the act of killing a murderer "ennoble or uplift the State"? No one who argues for the death penalty uses this kind of irrelevant rhetoric. We kill a murderer to show that the life of an innocent person is worth more than the life of a murderer; we do it to punish him, to prevent him from killing again, and to express our moral outrage.

The Victim's Song is a prodigious piece of work. It is probably fair to call it a piece of madness, of dementia. Mrs. Kaminsky herself might concur. It is not a book, really, though it tries to follow orthodox outlines. It is a rage masquerading as a book, and thus incoherent at many points. Lava flows from these pages. Deprived by the strictures of her own consciousness and the world she inhabits of the ability to avenge personally the murder of her son, and deprived as well of the possibility of seeing imposed the only punishment which for her would fit this crime, is it any wonder that Mrs. Kaminsky's "normal human soul" can find no rest? "Do not," she pleads finally,

> forget my son, and the murdered like him who fill the graves in every cemetery in this land. . . . Do not forget the spilling of the blood of one innocent being. Abhor it. Abhor it and work to prevent the murderers in our society from presenting us with the statistics that one person is killed in the United States every twenty-three minutes, and one out of three families is victimized by the scum of society.

For Alice Kaminsky and the parents of my murdered friend there is no justice. For the rest of us, how many murders will it take before we lose our footing altogether?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It's Like Putting Me in Slavery."

"For someone to take from me without my say-so is like putting me back in slavery."

Thirty-two years of teaching elementary school students in Chicago have honed Annie Lee Hudson's ability to boil issues to their basic terms—and nothing is more basic than freedom.

Annie Lee Hudson rejects slavery. She makes it easy to see why she—and six other Chicago teachers—are fighting heavy-handed officials of the Chicago Teachers Union in a lawsuit headed for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Like her fellow teachers, many of them former union members, Mrs. Hudson is being forced to pay compulsory "agency fees" to the union hierarchy to continue teaching.

Big Labor's mandate: "No dues, no job."

Annie Lee Hudson can pay the union or she can join the unemployed.

Union officials in turn are spending the compulsory dues they demand on activities which have nothing in the world to do with collective bargaining.

The result: Annie Lee Hudson—and millions of workers like her—are forced to finance radical political, social and ideological causes they would never support voluntarily.

And when teachers protest, they wind up in a kangaroo court controlled by the very same union pros who claimed to "represent" them in the first place.

From start to finish, the scheme violates basic human liberties. Annie Lee Hudson knows it; her fellow teachers know it; and so does the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

The appeals court ruled just last year that major portions of the compulsory dues setup are unconstitutional. The case is bound for the U.S. Supreme Court only because greedy union officials refuse to relent.

"I believe in unions—I do not believe in arrogance and corruption and people doing me any kind of way they want because they're the only game in town," Mrs. Hudson offers. "Unions have become very, very arrogant."

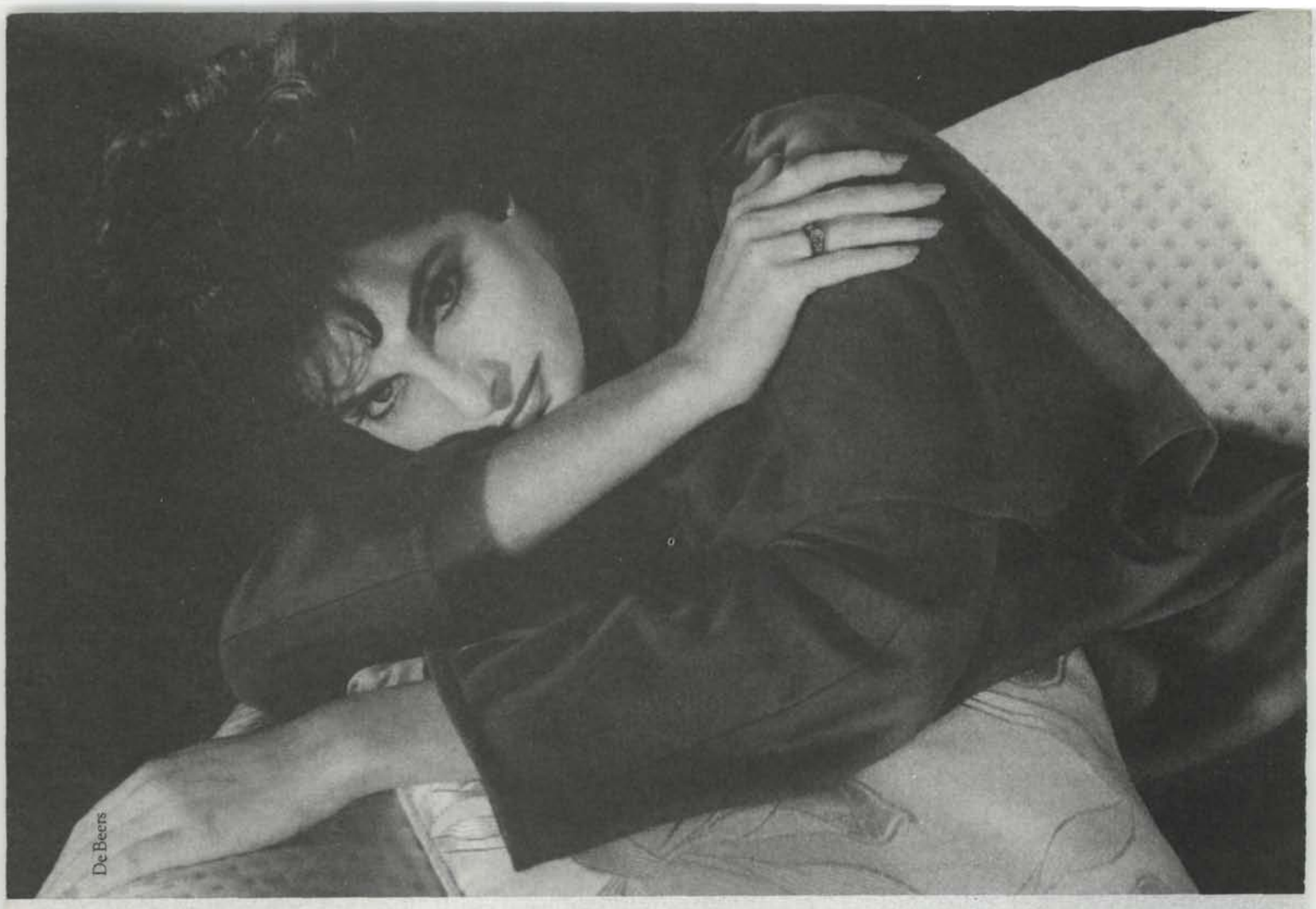
When this case goes before the highest court in the land, Annie Lee Hudson and her colleagues will be represented, as they have been since 1983, by attorneys for the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation. The Foundation is proud of its role of assistance and, in fact, is helping everyone it can—currently in more than 300 cases involving violations of academic and political freedom, illegal union political spending, union violence and other abuses of basic human rights.

If you would like to help people like Annie Lee Hudson, we would like to hear from you.

Mukul Roy

THE NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK LEGAL DEFENSE FOUNDATION
8001 Braddock Rd., Springfield, Virginia 22160

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



GIVE HER A DIAMOND WITH A FIRE TO MAKE THE STARS BURN WITH ENVY.

Every quality diamond of a carat or more is one of nature's rarest and most exquisite phenomena. Each is a visible reflection of you. Unique in all the world, possessing four vital qualities that set it apart forever. They are called the 4C's: Cut, Color, Clarity and Carat-weight. It is the 4© characteristics that determine the value of a diamond—and to an astonishing degree the beauty and value of your jewelry—no matter what the design.

Your jeweler is the expert where diamonds are concerned. His knowledge can help make the acquisition of a quality diamond of a carat or more the beautiful, rewarding experience it should be.

Give her a quality diamond of a carat or more. A truly rare and beautiful gift. Like the woman you love.

A diamond is forever.

The ring shown features a quality diamond of 2.04 carats.

A QUALITY DIAMOND OF A CARAT OR MORE.
A FIRE RARELY SEEN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED